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Peso perks up to 2-month high; 55.78 to $1

MOTORING
Car manufacturers keep up noise even with escalating oil prices

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Kidnapped boy in traumatic meeting with Roldan in court

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Water cannons have cooling effect, PNP tells protesters

By Luige A. del Puerto

Nov. 1 and 4 holidays but not Nov. 2 and 3

It's final: VAT law legal

Int'l survey rates RP's corruption severe

By Doris C. Dumlao

BITTER TASTE OF POVERTY
"Lugaw" (porridge) is distributed to children during a militants' rally at the Quezon Memorial Circle to symbolize the increasing number of hungry Filipinos on World Food Day on Tuesday. "Food is a universally recognized human right," the militants' statement read, "preventing that right must be accorded a higher priority than the pursuit of commercial advantage and free trade."

Tax takes effect on Nov. 1, says DOF

By Armando M. Nocum

Bro. Mike proposes referendum

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

Prices of utilities, health care, etc. to soar

By PDI Research

Aussie, Asean troops' entry in the works

By Fe Zamora and Michael Lim Ubac

STREET SMARTS
Two children may be crying to make out the meaning of the words on yet another streamer screaming the same message left over from one of the almost daily protest rallies going on in Metro Manila these days.

US to deport Jimenez back to RP on Nov. 21

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Marquez C. Ortiz

JIMENEZ: Home free by Nov. 22.

Story of little raindrop big help in teaching kids joy of reading

By DJ Yap

A3 WEATHER FORECAST

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Second FRONTPAGE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2005

Senate won't let Gonzales go

By TJ Burgonio and Christine O. Avendaño

THE COUNTRY'S CHIEF SECURITY ADVISER wants to go on medical leave, but the Senate won't let him go that easily.

The Senate isn't releasing National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales from an earnestly sought leave, a formal motion explaining why he should be released, Sen. Joker Arroyo said yesterday.

"On the basis of press reports that Secretary Gonzales would go on months of medical leave and the concomitant speculation that he would be released thereby, the entire context for travel upon orders by him is a formal motion explaining the reasons he should be released," Arroyo said.

Arroyo and his would immediately convene the Senate blue ribbon committee, which he chairs, once such a motion was filed.

"After conferring with the majority leader, Sen. (Republic) Nene Pimentel, we have agreed that should such a motion be filed, we would convene the committee and deliberate on the motion with dispatch and concern," Arroyo said in a statement.

Gonzales, who has been confined at the Philippine Heart Center under heavy security since Sept. 21, had asked Malacañang in his letter to go on indefinite medical leave.

He had installed on the government controlled with the US lobby firm Venable LLP and was cited in connection by the Senate and ordered detained for evading the senators' questions.

The contract entailed working till years for Philippines projects, including Charter changes, and paying Venable some $270,000 a month for its services over a period of one year.

Gonzales was rushed to the hospital after his blood pressure shot up during the Senate committee hearing.

Yesterday he said, "I am resigned to whatever," when asked how he felt about the senators' decision to keep him in their custody.

President Macapagal-Arroyo on Monday night granted Gonzales an indefinite leave of absence to allow him to attend to his medical problems.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told reporters the President was likely to designate National Security Council Deputy Director General Victor Ilhaya as acting NSC chief to oversee all sessions.

"The President continues to have confidence in Secretary Gonzales and pursuant to his aside queries on whether Mr. Arroyo intended to replace the national security adviser.

Gonzales said that according to the Swedish hospital that examined his angiographic taken at the PHC, he needed heart bypass surgery.

Doctors found he had two blockages, he said, one of which was in the left side of the main artery to the heart.

But Gonzales is also not about to let the senators out completely over him.

His camp yesterday filed a complaint before the Commission on Human Rights against Pimentel for calling him a pimp during the Sept. 22 blue ribbon committee hearing on the "Hello Garci."

Gonzales' political party, the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas, said its officers, Aloysius Santiagoman, charged Pimentel with "humiliating, embarrassing and harassing" the Malacañang official "before the eyes of the world" by describing him as a flawed character.

In the four-page complaint, PDSP said Ed, represented by Bernard Aurelio and Rhoda Ariola, said Pimentel violated Article 1 of the Constitution which states that the "State values the dignity of the human person and guarantees full respect for human rights."

They said Pimentel had opened Gonzales up to public ridicule, which was his only an unparliamentary act but a transgression of his right to human dignity.

They said what Pimentel did would be committed in search on the Presidency since Gonzales, being a Cabinet member, was the chief aide of President Arroyo.

In a press conference in Quezon City yesterday, PDSP spokesperson Jose Bautista said they would also sue Pimentel for libel.

With A/O Reps

Hike in budget for teacher training sought

By Alexis Pope

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DepEd) wants to double its budget for the training of public school teachers around the country from P500 million in 2006 to P1 billion in the succeeding years.

DepEd Officer in Charge Fe Hidalgo said expensive there have submitted a proposal which is now pending in Congress to allot P541 million for teachers' training for 2006.

But Hidalgo said the amount is not enough. "That's never enough to train all the teachers," she said, stressing that is upgrading of content, upgrading of skills and strategies in teaching, upgrading of trends in teaching processes and mastery of skills in teaching. That also includes training materials. It is useless to train if there are no training materials for the teachers to use," she explained.

Hidalgo admitted it would be difficult to train all of the almost half a million public school teachers. Instead, they would focus on teachers who are teaching subjects which they did not major in college. Priority is given to teachers in the core subjects like English, Science and Mathematics.

For 2005, Hidalgo said the DepEd spent only P81 million for teacher's training.

Most public school teachers reportedly are teaching subjects which were not their majors in college.

DepEd Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz, who is on leave, explained that DepEd would need P1 billion every year to train at least 10 percent of the 476,000 public school teachers.

The amount, he explained, would send around 50,000 teachers to seminar classes every year.

Luz explained that each teacher would need P15,000 for each seminar for tuition, cost of living, transportation, accommodation and other expenses.

To qualify for a minor degree in the subject they are teaching, a teacher needs 18 units. A minor degree is an earned to make the teacher qualified to teach that subject.

Luz, however, said that at the rate they are going, it would take 18 years to train all public school teachers in the country at least once.

He noted that the private sector often complains for its employees every five years.

He added that the DepEd has to sync with four universities in the region to accommodate teachers who want to upgrade their skills. These schools are St. Louis University in Baguio City, the West Visayas State University in Iloilo, the University of San Carlos in Cebu City and Ateneo de Davao.

Hidalgo added that they would also focus on teachers in Grades 1 and 2. "We also need to do intensive training for teachers in Grades 1 and 2 and have to teach reading effectively because our program is to make every child a reader by Grade 3. He really badly need that."

AFP: No private army for President

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO WILL never allow the creation of a private army to protect her against a coup in the defense forces is ready to protect her against any threat, a military spokesperson said yesterday.

"The President would ever set up a private army to fight groups threatening the government. The AFP will be loyal to the chain of command and will follow only lawful orders from our President," said Col. Tirso Bueno in Filipino.

Reports have unequivocally denied reports that the President's civilian allies had brought in a big shipment of arms, as opposition Sen. Rodolfo Biazon claimed since the weekend.

He denied the reports about the arms landing as well as claims that the firearms were meant for a "private army" that would be the latter's counter-coup force in the event of a military attempt to oust her.

"There's no truth to that," he said.

Citing his own sources, Biazon said that foreign ships have been unloading shipments of AK-47 Armalites and carbine versions of the AK-47 firearms off the coast of Northern Luzon, allegedly for the use of civilian groups supporting Ms. Arroyo.

Biazon, chair of the committee on national defense, said the first shipment arrived in May. He said the firearms rose from P18,000 to P28,000 each.

Biazon said former Armed Forces chief, said he had alerted the military about the arms shipment more than a week ago, following the publication in the Inquirer of a report by former US charge d'affaires Joseph Mussomeli that a civilian group was ready to foment Mr. Arroyo from a coup attempt by any "undesirable military."

Reyes said the military did receive reports of an alleged arms landing in July 2005.

"The report was verified by intelligence units but until now they have not found any basis to say that there was an arms landing," he said.

He said military intelligence units have also received weekly reports about supposed arms landings in Cambodia. Fyll Zamora and Luige del Puerto

But military needs 12 new battalions

THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES needs 12 battalions more—or 6,000 fresh troops—on hand up its 75 Army battalions currently battling communist insurgents, Muslim secessionists and Abu Sayyaf terrorists, AFP spokesperson Col. Tirso Bueno said yesterday.

The AFP would also need P426 million to train, arm and equip each battalion, Bueno said. Each battalion would have at least 500 soldiers, he said.

Bueno said the AFP needed more personnel to "fill the vacuum" created every time a battalion went on retreating.

"We have to address the vacuum that allows the enemies to train, recruit and operate when the troops are on retraining," he said.

According to Bueno, the communist New People's Army, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has declined in membership from a high of 25,000 armed guerrillas in 1987 to 7,300 this year. This 70% CPP has withdrawn from on and off peace talks with the government since the finding a political settlement in the 35-year-old insurgency.

He said the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which is also in peace talks with the government, had a dwindling membership of 11,000 while the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group were only had 500 followers.

The Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which signed a peace deal with the government in 1996, now has only about 40 members, Bueno said. Fyll Zamora

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Per SIA-GR Permit No. 2042, Series of 2005

Too much politics hurts the poor, says De Castro

By Cynthia D. Balana

BRIMMING CONFIDENCE ON THE POLITICAL crisis confronting the nation, Vice President Noli de Castro yesterday said many poor Filipinos could have better lives today if public officials and other political leaders were not preoccupied with too much politics and fighting each other.

In all-the-stuff remarks during the observance of the 2005 National Week for Determining Extreme Poverty at the Rizal Park, De Castro said that as a result of the frequent political bickering, the government's anti-poverty programs have been rendered useless as officials have had no focus instead on coming a divided country.

"What can the government do in bringing progress to our nation if it uses most of its time and resources in handling scandals created by too much politics in the country? Our country can never move forward if there are always people who want to bring it down," he said.

"If government officials and opposition leaders—both elected and appointed—will unite, we can solve the problem of urban poverty," added De Castro, chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC).

He said much could be achieved toward generating jobs and providing housing for the poor if people rallied behind the government instead of waging rallies and demonstrations in the streets.

De Castro said it would be difficult to solve the needs and concerns of every Filipino unless a common effort to alleviate their concerns pledged.

As HUDCC chair, he said he had been doing his best to address one of the basic needs of poor Filipinos—adequate and secure housing.

"It is also in the present national housing program that unity is here exemplified, documenting it into the most effective and important of the government to uplift the lives of marginalized Filipinos," he said.

"From so called 'squatters,' they have now become villagers' who can live with dignity" he said.

'GAGGING' MEDIA

Opposition 'overreacting' on EO 454, GMA allies say

By Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

DISPUTING OPPOSITION claims that Executive Order 454 was designed to "gag" radio and television networks, two administration legislators yesterday challenged the opposition to take the issue to the Supreme Court instead of resorting to "disinformation."

The opposition was "overreacting and being irresponsible" in claiming that the EO 454 was intended to curtail press freedom, said Lakas Representatives Monico Puentevella, vice chair of the House committee on communications, and Ezequiel Javier, vice chair of the committee on constitutional amendments.

The EO's only intent was to return the supervision of the National Telecommunications Commission to the Department of Transportation and Communications, they said.

"It's a shame when public officials do not do their research exhaustively before using government documents like executive orders signed by President Arroyo to malign her and scare the public," said Puentevella.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero revealed the existence of EO 454 last Monday, and claimed that the EO was meant to give the President "control" over broadcast and telecommunications companies.

The EO transferred the "supervision and control" of the NTC, the state agency that has regulatory jurisdiction over radio and television networks and telecommunications companies, to the DOTC. The NTC was under the control of the Commission on Information and Communications Technology that was created by EO 269 on Jan. 12, 2004.

"Under the Arroyo administration, there was never an incident where the DOTC used its power over [the] NTC to use the commission to control the media. There was never an attempt and there is no reason to do it now or in the future," said Puentevella.

Javier said the opposition's "disinformation" on EO 454 was part of their emergency rule story.

"They want to terrorize the people with media as their latest target. To resolve the issue, the minority should question EO 454 before the Supreme Court. We are confident the Supreme Court will uphold the legality of EO 454 since the directive was meant to streamline the bureaucracy," he said.

Party-list Rep. Crispin Beltran said that the "secret" issuance of EO 454 on Aug. 16 tended to confirm fears of a looming crackdown on the media.

Escudero yesterday said he received a personal assurance from Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza that the DOTC did not intend to "review, revise, modify" the decisions of the NTC relating to broadcast and telecommunications companies.

Mendoza and other DOTC officials trooped to the House on Monday as the DOTC's proposed budget was being heard by the House committee on appropriations that night.

No big deal, senators say

SOME SENATORS YESTERDAY VOICED DOUBTS that the transfer of the National Telecommunications Commission to the Department of the Transportation and Communication was part of the administration's plan to control the media.

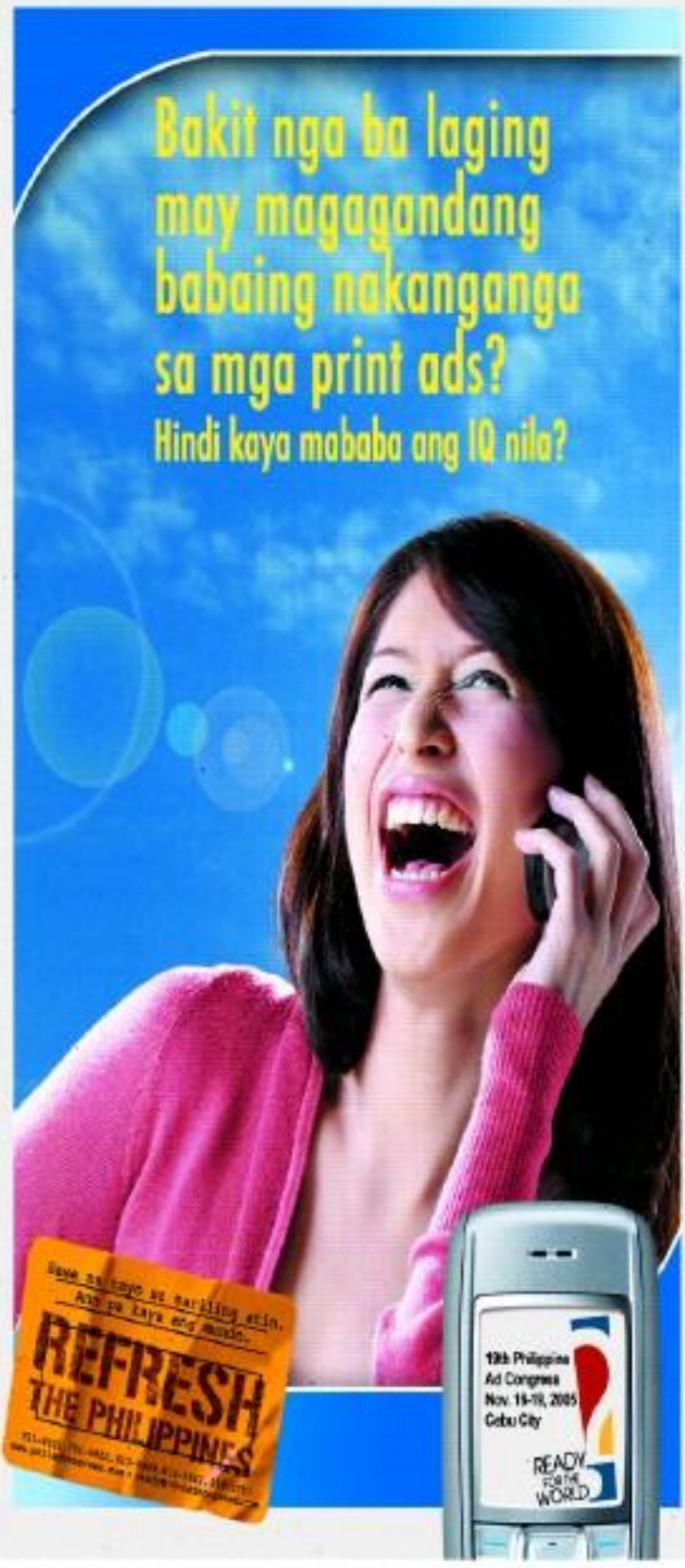
Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile said that the DOTC Secretary could not intrude into the "performance of quasi-judicial powers" of the NTC if ever the administration pressed ahead with the transfer.

"Personally I have not read the executive order, but if that's the only thing involved—a transfer of the administrative power that will govern the NTC and nothing more—I think it's too much to say that you are controlling media," he told reporters.

"They cannot tell you how to write your stories. They cannot tell the editors how to deal with events or any newsworthy happenings."

Administration Sen. Ralph Recto believed that the Executive Order 454, which provides for the transfer, was an "ordinary" order designed to cut bureaucratic red tape, not to crack the whip on media.

"I think it's an ordinary EO that is administrative in nature that possibly fixes many bureaucratic problems. The NTC and the DOTC are both involved in telecommunications and I suppose they should be coordinating with regard to telecommunication policy," he said. *TJ Burgonio*



IBON SURVEY

GMA rating slips further

By Blanche S. Rivera

THE GOVERNMENT MAY NOT GET a major boon either as President Macapagal-Arroyo's net satisfaction rating continued to take a beating and nearly half of Filipinos continued that she should be removed from office through people power.

The third quarter survey by think tank IBON Foundation showed the President's net satisfaction rating dropped to minus 7+7 percent compared with minus 67.8 percent in the same period last year.

More than half or 881 of the 1,500 respondents responding or 64.49 percent said they think the President should be "removed as the country's president" but there was no consensus here.

A huge number of respondents believe allegations that Mr. Arroyo had cheated in the 2004 presidential elections, or 68.20 percent. Only 7.03 percent think there was no truth to the allegations.

IBON's survey involved 1,366 respondents gathered from all 16 regions according to the regional's population size. It was conducted from Sept. 16 to Oct. 7 and has a margin of error of plus or minus three percent.

"The biggest cause of her sinking drop is political instability, economic policies, EVAT and her inability to stop the oil price hike," IBON media affairs Rex Padilla said in a phone interview.

The latest survey also gauged the respondents' sentiments on the clamor of Congress of the impeachment complaint against the President, with 72.06 percent believing that Congress' dismissal of the complaint was not justified.

To the question "What is to be done now that the impeachment was has been defeated?" 42.53 percent said she should be ousted through people power, 29.62 percent said people should demand her resignation, 21.57 said the public should just accept that Mr Arroyo will remain in office, while others had different or no answers.

When asked if they would join mass actions in the streets to remove Mr. Arroyo, 47.76 or 897 said they would while another 316 said they would not go in the streets to seek the President's ouster.

The government has received flak for its calibrated preemptive suppression policy, which seeks to prevent public protests perceived as seeds of destabilization attempts against the President.

The people's council being pushed by non-government organizations and other politicians has failed to get the support of the people as only 29.16 percent agree that this was how the President should be replaced.

Almost half of the population or 45.75 percent believe any change in the presidency should still be made through constitutional succession.

Vice President Noli de Castro's unflinching support for Ms Arroyo through the political crisis has been viewed as one of the key factors she remains in Malacañang.

JOEL GALORO

Imposa Chair Marisi Prieto (second from left) leads the ceremonial ribbon cutting during Monday's opening of the recording of the biannual Jobs Employment Expo at the Glorietta Activity Center. She is assisted by Anna Wikanan (left), director for strategy and planning of Convergys Lino Asenata, president of Personnel Management Association of the Philippines; and Lilia Ang, president of the Philippine Association of Local Service Contractors (right). The three-day fair, which ends today, has been a traditional event for the manpower job market, bridging the gap between jobseekers and employers and creating a venue for them to meet to make the hiring process easier and faster. Also attending the affair were Imposa officials led by executive vice president Durel Valdes and senior vice president Rene Reinoso.

Veterans no place for Erap, says defense

By Nelson F. Flores

POBLADO, MAGSAYSAY CITY (MORE) – Lawyer Jose Flaminiano yesterday said he is not defense of former President Joseph Estrada would be compromised should he be transferred to the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City from his vacation center in Tanay, Rizal, as insisted by Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio.

Flaminiano, a member of Estrada's defense team and a former colonel in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, said the VMMC was not neutral ground. He refused to elaborate.

He also said the VMMC was not a detention center and the room to be occupied by Estrada would be better given to patients.

A source close to Estrada, however, said the real reason the former President did not want to return to the VMMC was the hospital could be easily bugged by the government.

"If that happens (and it has happened), it would compromise the former President's legal defense strategy," the source said.

Flaminiano said Estrada's Greenhills, San Juan, residence was the best place in which to prepare his legal defense because, aside from being accessible, it was near to courts.

Flaminiano said friends would stay at the Polk Street home only while his lawyers prepared him for his court appearances.

"Maybe about two months," Flaminiano said.

Estrada's lawyers have asked the Sandiganbayan hearing the cases against the former Chief Executive to allow him to leave his detention at his Tanay estate and move to his Greenhills residence because of the inaccessibility of the estate. They said the five-hour round trip between Tanay and Metro Manila was too long.

They also said potential defense witnesses would find it easier to go to Greenhills to consult with the former President and his lawyers than to go to Tanay.

"This is part of due process," defense lawyer Rene Saguisag had said, adding that Estrada should be given every opportunity to prove his innocence.

Separated RP twins moving to new home

WHITE PLAINS, NEW YORK – Carl and Clarence Aguirre, the 2-year-old Filipino twins who were found at the head until US surgeons separated them, will soon leave their hospital room for a home of the family's near New York City.

The boys and their mother, Arlene Aguirre, who brought her sons to New York last year, again and has lived in hospital housing, are about to set up a household in Westchester County, county spokeswoman Victoria Rodman said Monday.

The family's new house is part of the Mutlah organization, which provides housing and social services for homeless and low-income families.

It's another milestone for the brothers, whose separation last year is considered a major success. There have been no serious complications. Doctors began walking in August and doctors express confidence that the boys' delayed speech will eventually approach normal.

Details of the family's move were to be announced Tuesday at Blythedale Children's Hospital, where Carl and Clarence have been living and recovering during between operations at another hospital.

Aguirre has said that even after moving out, the boys would continue to receive therapy at the hospital. Surgeons have said that the physical, occupational and neurological therapy the boys received at Blythedale was a key to the success of the separation surgery, which took place in four installments in 2003 and 2004. AP

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, October 19, 2005
29th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Rom 6:12-18
Gospel: Luke 12:39-48

"You also must be ready, 'For anyone to whom if the master of the house had known at what time the thief would come, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready for the Son of Man will come at an hour you do not expect."

Peter said, "Lord, did you tell this parable only for us, or for everyone?" And the Lord replied, "Imagine, then, the wise and faithful steward whom the master sets over his other servants to give them food at the proper time. How happy it is for that servant if the master on coming home finds him doing his work. Truly I say to you, the master will put him in charge of all his property.

"But if the servant says to himself, 'My lord delays in coming,' and he begins to abuse the manservants and the servant girls, eating and drinking and getting drunk. Then the master will come on a day he does not expect him and at an hour he doesn't know. He will cut him off and send him to the place that is the unfaithful.

"The servant who knew his master's will, but did not prepare or do what his master wanted, will be punished with many blows; but the one who did what deserved a punishment without knowing it shall receive fewer blows. Much will be required of the one who has been given much, and more will be asked of the one entrusted with more." Contemporary

Again Jesus tells us warn us: Pay attention to your life, to what is going on around you and how all this is part of what God's up. He sees to it in the end, so our work, waiting and living passionately because we don't know when the Son of Man, the crucified one, will turn up – will suddenly be among us again. We are to be wise and faithful stewards of the earth, of all that has been given to us – using with justice, integrity, serving those in need and making sure that the master's accounts and resources are used for those who were meant for – the poor. It our lord giving us his life to us in the eucharist, every moment in his Kingdom or find us wrapped up in our own pursuits and materials pleasures. We have been given so much – do we remember whom it belongs to and that all we give or treat to us? Are we sharing the gifts of God with those we are meant to serve? God has it under control – does we honored that trust?

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Rx What is DYSPEPSIA?

Dyspepsia is a common stomach condition marked by symptoms of BLOATING, FULLNESS, GAS, BURNING and GENERAL STOMACH DISCOMFORT. Sufferers experience these symptoms over and over again

Causes of DYSPEPSIA

Food stays longer in stomach

The stomach is normally in a state of motility, where the stomach propels food down the digestive tract through steady, rhythmic contractions. Dyspepsia is usually caused by dysmotility, in which stomach movement becomes uncoordinated and slows down emptying of its contents. This results in symptoms of dyspepsia like bloating, fullness and gas.

Dyspepsia can occur any time, but typically follows meals, especially with spicy and fatty food. Stress and alcohol can also trigger dyspepsia.

Treatment

A class of medication called prokinetics can relieve dyspeptic symptoms by restoring unhibly normal movement in the stomach. The most widely used prokinetic in the Philippines is domperidone, available in 10mg tablet form. Domperidone is best taken before meals.

See Your Doctor

If your symptoms persist, consult your doctor. Your doctor can help you manage dyspepsia.

By **Dr. Sherrie Querubin-De Ocampo**
Head, Motility Council,
Philippine Society of Gastroenterology

Job prospects in Abu Dhabi rosy

By Jerome Aning

JOB PROSPECTS FOR FILIPINO WORKERS in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates will improve in the next five years, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas said yesterday.

Sto. Tomas said Abu Dhabi, largest of the seven emirates comprising the UAE, is scrambling to attract investments for its future projects in hotel, construction, energy, tourism, and building of chemical factories.

The secretary said the labor department was gearing up to take advantage of Abu Dhabi's future projects and ensure that OFWs would benefit from the manpower requirements and be employed for those projects.

She said the Philippine Overseas Labor Office in Abu Dhabi was ready to coordinate with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration when Abu Dhabi employers would require more OFWs.

Globally, the UAE is one of the top 10 destinations of OFWs. Some 43,974 OFWs were deployed to the UAE in the first semester of 2006, or a growth of almost 23 percent (35,764) compared to 35,298 in the same period in 2006.

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HSBC
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Int'l survey rates RP's corruption severe

From page A1

present themselves," said David Hutchcroft, TI's deal executive.

"Leaders that go beyond lip-service to make genuine efforts to provide the environment and resources to improve governance, transparency and accountability."

RP is 117th among 159

Among the countries included in the index, corruption was perceived as most rampant in Chad, Bangladesh, Turkmenistan, Burma (Myanmar) and Haiti, which scored 1.7-1.8. They were also among the poorest countries in the world.

The Philippines' score dwindled from last year's 2.6 in the continuous 159.

Out of 159 countries rated, the Philippines placed 117th to a tie with Afghanistan, Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Kenya, Libya, Nepal and Uganda.

More than two-thirds of the 159 nations surveyed by Transparency International scored less than five in this year's rating.

The 'cleanest'

On the other hand, the top 10 scorers were Iceland (9.7), Finland and New Zealand (9.6), Denmark (9.5), Singapore (9.4), Sweden (9.2), Switzerland (9.1), Norway (8.9), Australia (8.8) and Austria (8.7).

The United States ranked 17th with a score of 7.6 and Japan shared the 21st ranking with Chile at 7.3.

The CPI is a composite survey, reflecting the perceptions of business people and country analysts, both resident and nonresident. The composite survey also draws on 16 different polls from 10 independent institutions.

But the index penalizes only a snapshot, with less sympathy as of the year-to-year trends.

The 2005 index bears witness to the double burden of poverty and corruption borne by the world's least developed countries, TI said.

"The two scourges feed off each other, holding their populations in a cycle of misery. Corruption must be vigorously addressed if aid is to make a real difference in freeing people from poverty."

Extensive research shows that foreign investment is lower in countries perceived to be corrupt, which further thwarts their choice to prosper, according to TI.

But when countries improve governance and reduce corruption, they reap a "developmental dividend" that, according to the World Bank Institute, can include improved child mortality rates, higher per capita income and greater literacy.

The TI report noted that 10 of the world's poorest countries had been granted debt waivers relief under the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, testifying to their economic reform achievements. However, not one of these countries scored above 4 on the CPI, indicating serious to severe levels of corruption.

Greed, mismanagement

The coalition said these countries still faced the gross risk that money freed from debt payments now wasting national budgets would be hijacked to greed, waste or mismanagement.

It said the combination of aid, governance (beyond) to qualifying for HIPC must also be applied to winning the fight against corruption.

Stamping out corruption and implementing recipient-led reforms are often seen as central to making aid more effective, and to realizing the crucial human and economic development goals that have been set by the international community.

An increase in perceived corruption from 2004 to 2005 can be measured in countries such as Costa Rica, Gabon, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Russia, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago and Uruguay.

Graft in rich countries

Conversely, a number of countries and territories show noteworthy improvements—a decline in perceptions of corruption—over the past year. They include Rwanda, Yemen, Hong Kong, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Qatar, Taiwan and Turkey.

The report said would-be countries a prerequisite for successful control of corruption.

A new long-term analysis of the CPI carried out by corruption expert Johann Graf Lambsdorff showed that the perception of corruption had decreased significantly in lower-income countries such as Tanzania, Colombia and Bulgaria over the past decade.

In the case of higher-income countries, such as Canada and Ireland, however, there has been a marked increase in the perception of corruption over the past 10 years, showing that even wealthy, high-scoring countries have work to maintain a climate of integrity.

Sharing the burden

Similarly, the responsibility in the fight against corruption does not fall solely on home-income countries, the report said.

The TI said would-be countries want, apart from having numerous corruption cases outlined their own responsibilities, must share the burden by ensuring that their companies were not involved in corrupt practices abroad.

It also said offenders must be prosecuted and barred from public building.

Government secrecy

The opportunity for ensuring sustainable progress also lies in the hands of the World Trade Organization, which needs to actively promote transparency and anti-corruption in global trade, the coalition stressed.

"The lessons are clear: rich business such as government secrecy, opaque systems of procurement and discretionary political finance apply to both wealthy and poorer countries, and in each country's interest to the scourge of corruption," the report said.

Aussie, Asean troops' entry in the works

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The Philippines has such a status-of-forces agreement—or SOFA—only with the United States.

The SOFA, which defines the legal status of foreign troops in the country, has allowed Washington to deploy special forces in Mindanao to train and arm Filipino troops battling militants linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network.

"Only through cooperation of all these countries can we hope to defeat this plan against terrorism," Ermi said at a press conference with visiting Australian Defense Minister Robert Hill.

Signing next month

"We intend to cooperate and even include a certain degree of liaison and cooperation with all the members of the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations)," Ermi said.

He said he had already ordered defense attaches to submit a "template agreement" for consideration by the dozen members.

Officials in Canberra said Australia clearing the way for joint training programs on counterterrorism and intelligence sharing might be signed by next month.

The news immediately raised the hackles of militant lawmakers, who wanted such an arrangement sealed under the Philippines' reciprocity to foreign intervention.

Threat very real

Australia has provided limited counterterrorist training to Philippine security forces, but Hill said his government wanted to play a greater role.

Although Australia has not been hit by a major terrorist strike, nearly 200 of its nationals have been killed in bombings on Indonesia's resort island of Bali and of its embassy in Jakarta last year.

Western officials have expressed concern over the reported training of al-Qaida-allied militants in Mindanao.

Two of the suspected masterminds behind the recent bombings in Bali, which killed about 20 people, are also believed to have used camps in Mindanao to hide.

"That terrorist threat is a very real one in Australia now," Hill said.

Next is Malaysia

"We had the possibility of overtures meeting in to the southern Philippines. We, therefore, have a real and vested interest in working with the Philippines to overcome that threat," he said.

Ermi said that after the Bali visit to Australia, the Philippines was planned to sign a similar accord with Malaysia.

He said such an accord would allow Australian forces to participate in the SPARTA (Malaysian military) exercises next year.

Like the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), the deal allows US troops to train in the Philippines, the SOFA will also need to be ratified by the Senate, Cruz said.

"It is important that we have a legal framework to allow them to train with us in the Philippines. The first step is the SOFA and then the next step will be to plan out these exercises," Cruz said.

US welcomes move

The United States welcomed the proposed accord between Australia and the Philippines.

"More cooperation and sharing of best in fighting terrorism is a good thing," US Embassy spokesperson Matthew Lussenhop said.

But party-list Rep. Etta Rosales lambasted, saying granting Australia the right to bring in troops and train Filipino soldiers in counterterrorism activities "has had China's interests in mind."

Rosales, chair of the House committee on human rights, cited three reasons the country should think twice before entering into a SOFA with another country.

One is the constitutional ban on foreign troops operating in the country. Another is, despite said, the presence of Australian soldiers can be an instant "magnet to attract foreign attacks," and third, accidents can occur resulting from friendly fire.

Rosales said invented groups like al-Qaida were not exactly "friendly" to the Philippines but if troops from US allies, such as Australia, were allowed into the country, terrorists could train their guns on Filipinos.

RP a war zone

"But more important is the territorial integrity of the country," she said.

Told that Bali arrangements could include other Asian nations, Rosales said: "Then that could turn it into a battleground, a war zone."

Senate Minority Party Sen. Rep. Teodoro Casiño said he would call for a congressional inquiry once Congress resumes session on Nov 7.

"We need to investigate this to make it clear if it's actually or an executive agreement," said Casiño. He also expressed concern that a SOFA would lead to intervention by Australian troops in the country.

Said Independent party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano: "Under the guise of fighting terror, the Arroyo government continuously betrays on [our] sovereignty."

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Story of little raindrop . . .

From page A1

The new paper are ideal for a classroom setting, as teachers could read the books aloud to the whole class, organizers said.

Focus on Filipino

Twenty-eight of the books are in Filipino, while only four are in English. The idea is to focus on the national language, said Estrella Gonzalez, elementary education chief of DepEd NCR.

The books are to be distributed to public elementary schools in cities and towns in Metro Manila, including Taguig, Marikina, Malabon and Las Piñas, he said.

BMB uses a four-pronged approach: First, beginner storybooks are for reading by teachers in a fun activity. Second, the story is used as a springboard for literal comprehension and, later, critical thinking. Third, the story is used to expose children to orthographic and grammatical conventions. And fourth, the pupils are taught to "decode" or recognize printed symbols.

Four years ago, a Department study found that 40 percent of Grade 1 pupils had fallen behind in their studies because they were illiterate. When the BMB program started, the rate of illiteracy was down to 30 percent—or 4 percent at the end of the school year, organizers said.

Lumabasan said using stories as an educational tool was one of the most effective ways of teaching pupils how to read. "Stories help keep pupils attentive to lessons, from adults like a good story," he said.

"Little Raindrop" by Gloria Villaraza Guzman and illustrated by Fidelito Manuel Jollores a water droplet in the sky wanting to be free, to a true leaf, falling into a mountain, a stream, a river, a lake, and a dam, and then, while on a rice field, returning to be human of Mother Cloud with his siblings, until they turn clouds again.

"Another Cloud was filled with pride for her children helped people, animals and plants," the story ends.

Mother octopus

Another children's book in the list is "Si Ilang-Ilang Octopus at ang Walong Kuting Pagiti" (Mrs. Octopus and Eight Small Octopuses), a story about a neglectful mother octopus who likes to gamble and spend time away from home while her eight children are left in food for themselves.

The story teaches children to detest when one of Octopus's children, Ilang-Ilang, gets lost and is almost eaten by a band of eight barracudas. Seeing this, the mother octopus is overjoy with guilt, finally ceasing off gambling and other vices.

The story was authored by Ronnie Cabrai and illustrated by Ana Rivera Jr.

"Si Ilang-Ilang Octopus at Ang Walong Kuting" Sept. 30 at the Quezon Memorial Circle, Quezon City.

Congress updates rent control law

By TJ Burgonio

AMID THE SOARING PRICES OF OIL, ELECTRICity and basic commodities, relief will soon come to 12 million households throughout the country in the form of an updated rent control law that limits the amount by which landlords can increase home rentals. The law will also benefit some one million students and countless workers living in boarding houses or renting bedspaces.

Members of the bicameral conference committee yesterday approved the final draft of the new rent control law which puts a cap of 10 percent per annum on any increases landlords may impose on tenants renting homes for P10,000 or less a month.

After introducing minor amendments in the language, the committee approved a motion by Rep. Eduardo Zialcita to adopt the Senate version of the bill authored by Sen. Ralph Recto.

The Senate bill retained the old law's 10-percent cap on rent increases but widened the coverage to houses or apartments renting out at P10,000 a month in Metro Manila and other cities, and P5,000 a month in rest urban areas. This means rentals on newly-constructed units may be increased only once a year and by not more than 10 percent.

Old cap

The old cap under the old law covered rents of P7,000 in urban areas and P4,000 elsewhere.

The bill as approved by the bicameral committee will be presented to the plenary of both chambers for ratification. Once signed by the President, the law will take effect for three years until December 2008.

"This basically defends the rights and privileges of a lessee and a lessor in short, you can't raise the rent of any residential unit by more than 10 percent," Recto, who filed the bill after the old law lapsed in 2001, told reporters during a briefing.

The Senate version was authored by Rep. Jesse Miguel Calalay.

Citing government statistics, Zialcita said that 12 million households, including five million in the Metro Manila, stand to gain from the passage of the Rent Control Act of 2005.

Some one million college students who do not enjoy free spaces, rooms, boarding houses and dormitories in Manila's "university belt," would directly benefit from it, Rep. Rodolfo Biazon said.

"In the university belt area, we have a lot of dormitories, apartment, dwelling areas which are being occupied right now by students. It will benefit not only thousands, but also millions of students in ... Metro Manila," he said.

Congress with a heart

Other members of the committee hailed the approval of the new rent control law, saying that it was proof that the chambers could work together to pass a major piece of legislation amid the political wrangling.

"Amidst political turmoil, this rent control law shows and proves both the Lower House and the Senate are working and have in mind the utmost interest of our countrymen," Rep. Rufus "Rodel" Fariñas III said.

"This shows that Congress has a heart for the Filipino people. In spite of a lobby from the economists, the House and Senate came together to give some hope for our countrymen who are still renting," he said.

Zialcita explained that the committee made with the 10-percent cap because this was the consensus of homeowners as well as renters.

Recto pointed out that the bill allows owners and lessees to collect two-months' deposit and one-month advance only.

"But one note more. This is much more considerate than the prohibitive three-month deposit and two-month advance currently collected by owner-lessors," he said.

Under the bill, the rent shall be paid in advance within the first five days of the lease agreement, unless the contract provides for a later date. The owner of the unit, in the lease, cannot demand more than one month advance rent.

The bill imposes a fine ranging from P5,000 to P15,000 or imprisonment of one month to six months, or both for violators.

Protest marchers find temporary haven in Munti

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A WOMEN WELCOME HOME NOTICE waiting for them on Mendiola Bridge, if they get there at all, but they have found at least temporary haven in Mandaluyong City.

Despite clear police warnings that the farmers would not be allowed to get anywhere near the bridge leading to Malacañang, city officials permitted the protesters belonging to the Kalipunan ng mga Samahang Magbubukid ng Timog Katagalugan (Kamista-TK) to stay in the city overnight.

Mayor lays down terms

But Pasmanil said down several conditions: "We cannot allow protesters to defecate and vandalize public property or protest matches to any schools."

The group plans to join other protesters planning to march toward Mendiola for a big rally on Friday. Lester Aran, secretary general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) Mandaluyong Chapter, told the Inquirer.

GMA's ouster

The protest will also include rallies outside the offices of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) in Quezon City—where they will air the farmers' grievances, he said.

"They will be raising issues such as land shares and wage increases," said Aran. And, of course, he said, they would call for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The group plans to proceed to St. Andrew's Parish Church in Pandacaqui City today.

"We have already secured a permit to rally from cities we would be passing through," said Aran.

Around 50 police men from the local police and roughly 1,000 from the Southern Police District (SPD) were deployed in key areas yesterday, especially in Tanauan, the boundary of Mandaluyong City and San Pedro, Laguna.

"We have no basis to stop them while in. They were just passing by," said SPD Director Wilfredo Eavila.

City police chief Supt. Robert Bangerlila said that even though he had allowed the rallies entry, it did not mean that the police would be lax in their security measures.

Water cannons have cooling effect, PNP tells protesters

From page A1

stone during demonstrations.

But instead of hospitalizing their foe, rally organizers should see fencing, dressed in something that could "cool down" rising tempers, said Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil.

"We think the use of a fire hose has a cooling effect," said Bataoil, chief spokesperson of the Philippine National Police.

Bataoil said they were observing on Friday, when police using a water cannon broke up a prayer rally near Mendiola, dousing former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, politicians, left-wing militants and several bishops and priests.

"Immediately after ... there were a crowing effect," he said. "No other disturbances then took place."

Those who got wet viewed the attack differently.

'Cannonization' victim

The 77-year-old Guingona on Monday told the Inquirer that he suffered a slight wound and swelling on his leg as a result of the "cannonization."

Others leaned down just a bit this way: *A decrease in always welcome, but not when it comes from a fire hose with a force so powerful it can pummel a person down to the ground.*

Bataoil said the use of water cannons was part of a police initiative to avoid more violent confrontations.

While it is legal to place fire trucks on standby during demonstrations, the police manual says a water cannon or tear gas should be used only as a last resort.

Truckloads have already been set aside, women cops have been put in the front lines as a response to claims that police had been unduly harsh, he said.

"These are our initiatives, our innovations to address what they said should be a more humane way of handling such a situation," Bataoil said.

Friday rally

The unease the police would again see water cannons against the planned mammoth rally on Friday when anti-Arroyo forces said they would try to "reclaim" Mendiola, a historic site for demonstrations against the government.

The last violent police dispersal on the bridge during the administration of President Corazon Aquino in 1987 left 13 heroes dead.

According to Bataoil, it is always possible for demonstrators to infiltrate a demonstration.

"But rest assured that neither the police nor the Armed Forces will start any trouble," he said.

Whether the police is called calibrated preemptive response or by any other name, they said, will simply follow its manual of operations, which provides for a step-by-step process of dispersing a crowd without a rally permit, Bataoil said.

Respect security zone

Maximum tolerance, he explained, does not mean the lacing of a Molotov to a threatening disorganized throw. It means the police would exercise restraint and minimal force in enforcing a law, such as the law on public assembly, the PNP chief said.

Bataoil called on rally organizers to respect the security zone ringing Malacañang.

"Mendiola a leading toward the seat of power. Everywhere in the world, such a place is accorded security zone. Iyan ginagawa dun," he said.

"But we appeal to our citizens to also respect our security systems."

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Bro. Mike proposes referendum

From page A1

asking the people: If [Gloria Arroyo] is performing well, do you want her to continue? Or if not, put the issue to the electorate by saying: If you favor her continuity, elect presidentiable candidates; if not, vote down coa," Iglesia said the hopiess in an interview on Monday.

With political tensions raring to a boil, Iglesia has reportedly teamed up with Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal to beef up efforts to reconcile the factions and last year.

An influential figure in President Joseph Estrada's administration yesterday said that after failing in his initial effort to have Mr. Arroyo and the marches deposed under hands in front of thousands of El Shaddai members two months ago, Iglesia remained optimistic that a "principled cooperation" would be reached by administration and opposition forces.

The highly placed source told Iglesia and Vidal were working on setting up a meeting between Mr. Arroyo and Estrada, and also with her opponents in Congress, civil society and the Church.

Snap election

The source said that while the opposition had changed, the formula for reconciliation remained the same. He said both Iglesia and Vidal wanted the President to cut her term short and call for a snap election as the ultimate solution to the political crisis.

Mr. Arroyo's chief adviser, Speaker Jose de Venecia and former President Fidel V. Ramos—have both suggested a shorter term for her.

The source said Iglesia had proposed that the President hold the snap election on May 20, 2007, which would mean that she would have stepped down in advance of the 2007 midterm polls.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Ignacio Bunye and Senate President Franklin Drilon, who had rallied on his Arroyo-to-stop drama.

"If the administration will just open up to sources, I think we'll be able to [forge] a workable compromise. The people inform I have talked to, the people who are here on pulling her down, are also looking for a workable solution. They say their interest is really for the common good," he said.

Working strategy

The source said the simmering rift between the administration and the opposition had flared up Iglesia's resolve to pursue reconciliation, albeit using another strategy.

"He does not want to go through political leaders this time. He wants to convey the reconciliation message to nonpolitical sectors, [such as] religious leaders like Cardinal Vidal and businessmen," the source said.

Iglesia and Vidal's strategy appears to be working, the source said.

He said the grant of a leave of absence to National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales was part of the back-channel efforts to defuse the tension between the Palace and the Senate, who are at a standoff on Gonzales' refusal to tell all about the US$329-million broadband CLT in a legislative inquiry.

The source said that from initial discussions, Mr. Arroyo and De Venecia appeared amenable to a snap election but that they wanted Congress to first amend or repeal the Constitution to effect a shift to the parliamentary form of government.

But some participants in the supposed discussions seemed in the other way around, the source said.

2-year peace

Iglesia told the Inquirer that putting Mr. Arroyo's fate in the electorate's hands through a referendum in 2007 could be the basis for a working arrangement with opposition forces that would allow her to govern in peace for the next two years.

"This could be one of the talking points if they [opposition leaders] will enter the picture," said Iglesia, leader of the Catholic Church-based charismatic group that claims five million membership.

He did not specifically refer to lingering doubts about her authenticity as President, since the 2004 election: "Let's look at the root cause of our [political] problem but let us not dwell on that. Let us talk about the solution that will once and for all end the controversy, so which, I believe, only the electorate can really provide the answer. Going to the polls may be the best solution."

Iglesia, a spiritual adviser for Mr. Arroyo, rallied to his "Honorable but principled suggestion."

"Actually, I would not want to use the word 'power-sharing' [but the phrase] 'principled reconciliation'—a working arrangement based on accepted principles that both [the administration and antigovernment forces] would be comfortable [with]," he said.

'Let the people speak'

Iglesia said the proposed referendum on the President could fit into the midterm elections in May 2007.

"If the door very well, let the people speak through the polls, and she must finish her term, but if the result of the referendum is the opposite, let her decide for the common good; it's up to her to act accordingly," he said, adding:

"She, in turn we hope give her a chance to work in a normal condition, and that can only be done if all parties concerned in the conflict agree on certain conditions. And I think the religious leaders, the academe and the business leaders can act as moderators."

The statement included the demand that the opposition would accept her formula: "They are reasonable people. I have spoken to them and all of them are looking for the appropriate solution to the problem."

Velarde declined to name all the opposition figures he had been talking with, but reasoned that he included the detained Garcia, Bunye, Lacson, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, and even Senate President Franklin Drilon, who had rallied on his Arroyo-to-stop drama.

"If the administration will just open up to sources, I think we'll be able to [forge] a workable compromise. The people inform I have talked to, the people who are here on pulling her down, are also looking for a workable solution. They say their interest is really for the common good," he said.

Unclear signal

But Malacañang has yet to give a positive response to Mr. Iglesia, Velarde said.

"The signal I am receiving is not yet very clear; it's neither yes or no..." he said.

Nevertheless, he said, he had advised Mr. Iglesia to explore all avenues for a "principled cooperation" with the opposition.

"I also advised her during the voting [on the impeachment case], and even up to now, to reach out because I still believe things can be worked out for the common good," he said.

Velarde had earlier proposed a 60-40 sharing of Cabinet posts, with the opposition getting the more senior.

He managed to have, and principally by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, that an opposition-dominated Cabinet would be disapproved by Mr. Arroyo because it would oust her from office.

"That can be supplanted. What we can do is sign a document that such things will not happen. The government must continue under the constitution," he said.

No to Cha-cha

Velarde said he no longer agreed to amending the Constitution now as a means to resolve the political crisis.

"Charter change will take time, and besides it should not be rushed," he said.

He brushed off Mr. Arroyo's creation of a consultative commission to recommend specific amendments, saying: "Even then it's being questioned because... This nation is under duress, and definitely we'll not be able to come up with a basic Charter that will answer the problems that we are going through."

In Velarde's opinion, Charter change should be undertaken in 2007.

"Not before, not at this time, because this time, considering the tensions are running so high, and the recent result of the impeachment process in the House [on the ability of our legislators—who would eventually probably become members of parliament]... as provide check and balances [under a cloud of doubt]," he said.

SPORTS
Editor
Tokkyo S. Melendres

DLSU admits: Not 1, but 2, unfit Archers

DepEd confirms Inquirer report

By Jasmine W. Puyo

DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY CONFIRMED YESTERDAY THE INquirer's exclusive report that two ineligible players were fielded during the Green Archers' 2004 UAAP championship run and pledged to expand its investigation to get to the bottom of the controversy.

The confirmation came after La Salle received a letter from the Department of Education yesterday stating that another member of the 2004 champion squad submitted fake high school records.

The letter came just as an investigative panel formed by the school was interviewing Mark Bautista, who finally came out in the open yesterday to air his side of the story.

Bautista was the first player identified as having submitted a fake Philippine Educational Placement Test Certificate (PEPTC) to gain entry to the school and to the team.

The school refused to release details of the Bautista interview.

Again, La Salle did not disclose the second player's name. But the statement also verified the Inquirer report, saying that "the player is not in the active roster this season, but is currently enrolled."

After the Inquirer broke the story on the second ineligible player last Sunday, however, internet message boards tagged point guard Tim Gaithallos as the other player.

Gaithallos and Bautista both came from San Sebastian University and suited up for the Archers in 2004 after undergoing a one-year residency.

"We are expanding the scope of the investigation to include this case," said Lito Tanpoco, a member of the four-man committee investigating the eligibility scandal.

The letter from the DepEd stated that another player's PEPTC "has failed out to be spurious."

The statement added that La Salle received a letter from the DepEd on Aug. 18 affirming that the document of yet another player "was still subject to verification."

"DLSU welcomes its determination to get to the bottom of this once we are could institute appropriate remedies for the future," the statement read.

The admission of the second player further goes on to ascertain that other parties were involved in facilitating the two players' documents.

"I do not believe that those players concerned are capable of falsifying their own papers," said UAAP technical committee chair Ricky Palou, who had earlier banned for an investigation of all the schools' transcription in the last 10 years.

Palou also said that "the [National Bureau of Investigation] should start looking into this because this is already a public document we are talking about."

A source from a leading television station had earlier revealed that the parents of Bautista were ready to reveal the name of a former member of the La Salle coaching staff who facilitated the papers. With a report from Jihanny Castillo

GAITCHALIANS

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Wrestling finds home

ALL ACCOUNTED FOR, EACH OF THE 43 sports disciplines for the Southeast Asian Games next month already has venues, including previously "homeless" wrestling. Manila Sports Council chair Ali Atienza said yesterday he will secure a permit for the use of the San Andres Gym as the venue for wrestling. The 10 wrestlers, credited for four gold medals during the Vientiane 2004 two years ago, are currently training in Mongolia. Mel V. Anthony Reyes

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Ibarra

BIRD FLU PANDEMIC

World needs 6 months to prepare – UN

HANOI—THE WORLD NEEDS AT LEAST SIX MORE months to prepare for a possible pandemic caused by bird flu, with poor countries in Asia needing help in financing emergency plans, the United Nations' coordinator for bird and human influenza says.

Dr. David Nabarro said it is important for countries to pay attention to researchers' warnings now so the world can try to prevent a flu pandemic that could sleep across borders and oceans, possibly causing "billions, even trillions" of dollars in damage.

As bird flu spreads among poultry stocks, most recently in Turkey and Romania, Nabarro urged calm and preparedness.

He said it's impossible to know what would happen to countries if millions of people suddenly became sick and stayed home. "Bird flu is a killer bug on that scale since 1918, when the Spanish flu killed up to 50 million people and sickened 20 percent to 40 percent of the world's population.

"We don't have a simple way to reassure people, but at the same time, as of, we shouldn't make people feel any kind of false comfort," he said in an interview Monday. "We have to deal the right blend between crisis fear and some sense of real preparedness and willingness to respond."

Nabarro said the world needs at least another six months to a year to prepare for a possible flu pandemic. He plans to ask the international community to help finance emergency planning in poor Asian countries that have been hit by the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus, which has killed more than 60 people, mostly in Vietnam, and millions of birds since 2003.

Most human bird flu cases have been linked to contact with sick birds or germs but the virus could mutate into a form that can be easily spread between people, possibly sparking a global pandemic.

Nabarro said an agreement about the stockpiling and control of antiviral drugs like Tamiflu, produced by Switzerland's Roche Holding AG, also needs to be reached among countries to guarantee that poor countries will have access to medicines. "It will be more unfortunate if the stocks that are available are sequestered, and they're inaccessible to the people who might need them because the pandemic has started and they can't get them because their sovereignty is poor," he said.

Appointed to the UN position last month, Nabarro went on a fact-finding mission to Thailand, Vietnam and China. He said the world got a small taste of how dramatically an outbreak could affect everyday life during the 2003 SARS outbreak when the virus jumped rapidly from Asia to other parts of the globe via air travel, killing nearly 800 people. AP

Bird flu reaches EU for 1st time

LUXEMBOURG—EUROPEAN UNION foreign ministers held emergency talks Tuesday on the widening bird flu scare, a day after tests in Greece indicated the virus has reached the EU for the first time.

The EU was preparing to ban sales of live birds and poultry from the Aegean Sea region of Chios pending tests on samples taken from turkeys found infected with the deadly Asian H5N1 strain.

Poultry from Turkey and Romania have already been banned by the EU as bird flu found there was confirmed as H5N1. Bans were also being carried out in Russia in Bulgaria and Croatia.

Officials said the foreign ministers are to discuss the international response to the continued spread of bird flu and take stock of EU national readiness to deal with a possible pandemic.

The H5N1 strain has swept poultry populations in large countries of Asia since 2003, jumping to humans and killing at least 62 people—more than 40 of them in Vietnam—and resulting in the deaths of tens of millions of birds.

Its spread accelerated by migrating wild fowl has intensified fears in Europe that the virus could mutate into one that can be easily transmitted among humans—a development that experts fear could provoke a global epidemic that puts millions of lives at risk.

The EU stepped up biosecurity measures and issued early detection systems along the migratory paths of birds to prevent contamination of domestic flocks. But there are concerns that European nations lack stockpiles of vaccines and anti-virals to cope with a major outbreak.

Seeking to calm public fears, the head of the EU's new agency for disease prevention on Monday downplayed the current risk to humans.

"The risk to human health, to public health, at this stage is minimal," Zsuzsanna Jakab said in the EU agency's headquarters in Sweden.

However, she said the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control was drawing up guidelines on how members who deal with infected animals can protect themselves against infection.

"There is a little more risk because who have close by worked with the infected animals, so our goal must be to further minimize that risk," Jakab said. AP

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LIFESTYLE 20

Quake death toll seen rising

MUZAFFARABAD, PAKISTAN—Pakistani and U.S. military helicopters delivered aid at a brisk pace to the earthquake-ravaged region of Kashmir on Tuesday, but officials rushed to step up relief hospitals as tens thousands of stranded, injured people who have yet to receive any care.

Choppers landed under sunny skies in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan's portion of the divided Kashmir region, bringing tents and other supplies. Heavy rains on Sunday grounded many relief flights.

Authorities warned that exposure and infections could drive the death toll up from 54,000 as the harsh Himalayan winter loomed. Landslides caused by the 7.6-magnitude earthquake on Oct. 8 cut off many roads, and they could take weeks to clear.

Maj. Farooq Shah, an army spokesperson, said smaller helicopters would take relief goods brought by big choppers to forward bases in the Neelum and Jhelum valleys set to receive mountain villagers.

The United Nations said more than 80 helicopters were flying, and that the world body was planning to send up to 150,000 tents for the homeless, in addition to about 90,000 already distributed.

It said field hospitals with operating theaters were being set up, improving the survival chances for those requiring urgent surgery, but that the large numbers of patients was still "overwhelming."

Most of the deaths were in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, while 1,300 people died in the Indian-held part of the divided region. Conflict in Indian Kashmir continued Tuesday, with suspected Islamic militants killing the state's education minister during a raid on a high-security neighborhood that also left at least three others dead.

Soldiers were exchanging fire with militants holed up at the home of the minister, Ghulam Nabi Lone, police said.

The attack came despite an order from the United Jihad Council, an umbrella organization of militant groups, to suspend attacks after the quake.

India has provided some aid to Pakistan, but turned down a helicopter suggestion that it send military helicopters....without crews....to help with relief work. Pakistan, which has fought two of its three wars with India over Kashmir, said it could not have the Indian military wandered directly to relief efforts.

Aftershocks continued shaking the region, though no further damage was reported. Pakistan's seismological center in Peshawar said Tuesday there have been more than 760 aftershocks since the quake.

More 80,000 people were injured in the quake. The United Nations has estimated 3.3 million were left without homes and need food and shelter ahead of the approaching winter, with snow already falling in some affected areas.

Maj. Gen. Farooq Ahmed Khan, Pakistan's top relief official, said 23,000 tents and 150,000 blankets have been distributed to quake survivors. He said 200,000 more and two million blankets were needed.

Eighty Pakistani soldiers were flown by helicopter into the Kashmir Valley about 25 km northwest of Muzaffarabad, to carry emergency rations and other relief supplies on foot to those in need, the army said.

Soldiers also drove trials teams with relief supplies to some of the region's many-added villages, crossing people carrying bundles on their shoulders carefully walking down to lower elevations.

Patients with infected wounds and gangrene languished in wooden areas, Red Cross official Sebastian Nemah said.

In Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, authorities said the death toll from a collapsed apartment block—the city's only building destroyed in the quake—rose to 62 as more bodies were found. Fourteen other people were injured.

The UN International Labor Organization warned that more than 1.1 million jobs may have been lost as a result of the earthquake in Pakistan, adding that employment programs were urgently needed to fill millions of people out of poverty deepened by the disaster.

There were some signs of normality returning in Muzaffarabad on Tuesday, until the devastation. Some shops reopened for business, and a solitary mobile telecommunications company set up outside where subscribers can make telephone calls or send e-mails and faxes, free of charge. AP

PAKISTANI soldiers load mules carrying aid for people affected by the Oct. 8 earthquake, as they approach the Pakistani-Kashmir village of Bhoot.

Troops use mules to send aid to quake victims in Pakistan

MUZAFFARABAD, PAKISTAN—TROOPS WERE sailing mule paths through landslides on Tuesday to get relief items of thousands of refugees in the Pakistani valleys cut off since an earthquake rocked northern Pakistan 10 days ago.

Helicopters, back in the air after weekend rains grounded the early waves of getting aid deep into the mountains quickly, were delivering some aid and bringing back people who had had injured times their would save shattered.

But helicopters cannot reach thousands of people in some remote, narrow valleys, leaving many to trek for many hours, even days, to find help.

Some of the most desperate areas are in Pakistan-Kashmir's Neelum and Jhelum valleys which converge on Muzaffarabad, the regional capital and scene of a rapidly growing relief operation.

But the bridges into the valleys are shattered and the roads are choked or swept away.

Lt. Col. Kiran Jaji, a military spokesperson in Muzaffarabad, said army engineers had managed to clear and rebuild only 2 km of the road into the Neelum valley.

After another chilly night, soldiers were calling radio across the landslides to get heavily laden mules up to the villages where nobody knows just how many people need help after the quake which killed at least 41,000 in Pakistan and injured 67,000.

"There are no roads in each village on the ground. Where it is difficult, they are establishing a mule track," Sajjad said.

British doctor Sean Keogh made a three-day trek up the Neelum valley and recounted seeing up to 2,000 people in urgent need of treatment, many with injuries in charge of becoming septic. Reuters

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Merkel names several rivals to her Cabinet

BERLIN—GERMAN CHANCELLOR-designate Angela Merkel named several leading conservative rivals as join her cabinet on Monday as power-sharing talks expected to last several weeks began with the Social Democrats (SPD).

As coalition negotiations between Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU) and the SPD got under way, key conservatives named respected CDU veteran Wolfgang Schaeuble to head the Interior Ministry, a position he also held under former Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Schaeuble, 63, whose relations with Merkel grew strained when she helped oust him as CDU leader in 2000 amid a party funding scandal, is poised in the cabinet to Edmund Stoiber and Horst Seehofer, top figures in the CDU's sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU).

Both Stoiber, 64, who is slated to become economy minister, and Seehofer, 56, who was named agriculture and consumer protection minister, have a history of clashes with Merkel.

Seehofer resigned abruptly from his post as deputy leader of the joint CDU/CSU parliamentary group one year ago after a battle with Merkel over health reform.

In recent days she tried to get another CDU politician, Michael Glos, named as defense minister to prevent Seehofer's appointment, but *CSU chief* Stoiber blocked that move.

Merkel has a history of sidelining party rivals and thus has left her with few experienced conservative allies for top posts.

Her party's unexpectedly poor result in a Sept. 18 election also curbed her ability to dictate who will be in her team.

"I expect this cabinet to work as a team," Merkel told reporters as the ministers were unveiled.

With rivals from the SPD and her own conservative ranks in the cabinet, Merkel will be walking a fine line as she tries to reconcile conflicting personal and policy objectives.

Merkel's conservatives were forced into coalition talks with outgoing Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's SPD after they failed to win enough support in last month's election to govern with their favorite minded allies, The Free Democrats (FDP).

Reuters

Terrorism r
wars waning

UNITED NATIONS—ARMED conflicts have dropped 40 percent since the end of the Cold War and those that persist are killing far fewer people, says a three-year study that attempts to debunk current myths about war and peace.

But even if genocide and human rights abuses are receding, "high casualty" attacks by terrorists are not, according to the Human Security Report prepared at Canada's University of British Columbia in Vancouver.

Nevertheless, international terrorism kills only a "tiny" number of people each year compared to those who die in war, the report said.

"We no longer have huge wars with huge armies, major engagements, heavy conventional weapons," said Andrew Mack, an academic and former UN official who directed the study, funded by Canada, Britain, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland.

"Today's wars are low-intensity fought with light weapons; small arms in very poor countries. They are often extremely brutal but they don't kill that many people." he told a news conference.

The report [illegible] number of conf[illegible] 40 percent since ended and the U[illegible] Hussein stopped wars in Irel[illegible]

The average [illegible] per conflict cla[illegible] 27,000 in 1950, [illegible] an May, to 600 in [illegible]

Between 199[illegible] armed struggles [illegible] nation started o[illegible] 83 were concen[illegible] study said. In 2[illegible] only 25 such co[illegible] cut number enco[illegible]

Even the num[illegible] dropped by 45 [illegible] 1992 and 2003 [illegible] ended.

And despite th[illegible] in Rwanda, the [illegible] becoming a year [illegible] missing targets [illegible] Sudan. Mack sa[illegible] genocide and "p[illegible] percent between

Genocide is [illegible] murder of geo[illegible] their ethnicity, [illegible] casualties. Politic[illegible] ral victims in

Iraqi court to op

BAGHDAD—SADDAM HUSSEIN and seven senior members of his toppled regime go on trial Thursday in connection with charges they ordered the 1982 killings of nearly 150 people from the mainly Shiite town of Dujail following a failed attempt on Saddam's life.

Court officials have said they are trying Saddam on the Dujail massacre first because it was the easiest and quickest case to put together. Other cases they are investigating—including a crackdown on the Kurds that killed an estimated 180,000 people—involve much larger numbers of victims, more witnesses and more documentation.

If convicted, Saddam and his co-defendants could face the death penalty, but they could appeal before another chamber of the Iraqi Special Tribunal.

Saddam and the co-defendants are expected to hear the charges against them during Wednesday's hearing, [illegible] and the exact [illegible] matters. The trial [illegible] be adjourned for [illegible]

Prime Minister [illegible] fact complained [illegible] Iraqi court, said [illegible] long time to pre[illegible] brushed aside [illegible] court could be [illegible] former dictator.

"I don't think [illegible] clear-cut crimes [illegible] those committed [illegible] the Shiite Muslim [illegible] whose clear relat[illegible] elder brother, wit[illegible] dam's regime in [illegible] 1990s.

He underlined, [illegible] deaths in his fam[illegible] that he would ge[illegible] of satisfaction if [illegible] eventually exec[illegible]

"I try to forget [illegible] my brother, and [illegible] cover an issue of t[illegible]

AUTUMN FEST
Japanese Shinto priests holding up paper umbrellas bow in a ritual, during an autumn festival at Tokyo's Yasukuni Shrine Oct. 19. Some 200 Japanese lawmakers paid their respects at this shrine for the war dead. AFP

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OPINION

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Parameters

SINCE THE DAYS OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIA Treaty Organization, the Philippines and Australia have increasingly formalized a closeness that dates back to their being allies during World War II. Strains were created under the auspices of the Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty by representatives of Australia, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand and the United States during the Manila Summit of 1954, and lasted until 1977. Thereafter, Australia withdrew, in a sense, from active engagement in regional security matters, although the 1980s saw a renewal of Australian diplomatic interest in the region. Australia and the Philippines signed a defense cooperation agreement in 1995.

EDITORIAL

With the onset of America's War on Terror, Australia has positioned itself as an aggressive ally. In 2002, Prime Minister John Howard informed the region when he said he would support launching preemptive military strikes against terrorists based in neighboring countries if they posed a threat to Australia. His government has actively supported American efforts to engage in anti-terrorism activities in our part of the world. Australia has also increased its security assistance to the Philippines, and in 2003, it signed agreements combating terrorism and transnational crimes.

Last week, the head of Australia's elite special forces, Maj. Gen. Mike Hindmarsh, visited Zamboanga City. The purpose of his visit was to get a briefing by Philippine officials on the security situation, particularly with regard to the efforts to hunt down two Jemaah Islamiyah bomb-makers who had helped assemble the bombs used in the 2002 Bali attacks that killed more than 200 people, including scores of Australians. Australia's Special Air Service Regiment and the Australian Security Intelligence Organization are closely working with the Philippine military to apprehend the two Indonesian bombers.

Hindmarsh was followed by Defense Minister Robert Hill, who said his visit was "about how we can strengthen our ties and our defense systems, and exchange useful intelligence information about the Jemaah Islamiyah." His remarks were followed by concrete proposals to have Australian soldiers train the AFP in counter-terrorism tactics.

Australia says it wants an agreement patterned after the Visiting Forces Agreement which allows periodic joint exercises to be conducted by Philippine and American troops. Last year, the Philippines proposed a "Status of Forces Agreement" with Australia, and the US has publicly endorsed the agreement, which covers not only the parameters under which Australian troops would operate while in the Philippines but matters such as the applicability, if any, of Philippine laws to Australian soldiers who get into trouble with Filipinos.

However, any such agreement would require a treaty, and the concurrence of the Philippine Senate. In the case of the United States, the Visiting Forces Agreement was entered into under the framework of yet another treaty, the Philippine-American Mutual Defense Treaty, and received the Senate's concurrence. Our Constitution doesn't permit the presence of foreign troops in the Philippines for any extended duration otherwise.

While it is reassuring that neither the AFP nor the Australian military at least based on their public pronouncements, envisions the active participation of Australian troops in combat activities, increasing the level of participation, cooperation and training between the AFP and the Australian military will require an explicit statement of policy from the concerned governments to that effect. While training and equipment are badly needed by our Armed Forces, every possible reassurance must be given that the constitutional limitations on the presence of foreign troops on Philippine soil will be respected. This entails that the process of discussion, dissemination, and debate over the terms of any proposed treaty will not only have to involve the Senate, but the public as well. Neither country can afford to turn an alliance into an opportunity for mutual recrimination and hostility.

Read the Constitution and BP 880 thoroughly

IT SHOULD BE COMPULSORY FOR ALL policymen and public officials, from the President down, to read the Constitution and understand what it means—in particular what issues like the present controversy over rallies, the law that governs that activity. Some public officials even have admitted to the Commission on Human Rights that they have not read Batas Pambansa 880, but it appears that top police officials, the justice secretary, and even the President himself have not read it. Yet if they did, the hasty dean of the peaceful rallyers last Friday the 14th would not have happened.

Section 18, paragraph 1(c) of the law prohibits the use of water cannons to disperse a peaceful assembly. The law can, under grounds, use water cannons, or any similar anti-riot device shall not be used unless the public assembly is attended by actual violence or serious threats of violence, or deliberate destruction of property. The rally was very peaceful—at first, leaders of the assembly and police officers were negotiating—when the two hoses opened up with their water cannons.

BP 880 which the police use owing to many the dispersal of public rallies was, ironically, issued by the Marcos regime in 1985 to guarantee the right of the people to assemble or to petition for the Bill of Rights. Imagine that, it was the dictator Marcos, the sponsor of martial law, who passed a law not to curtail public rallies. Also it is the regime of the Glue that is imposing the rights of the people guaranteed by the Constitution.

The police are to be on the scene not to prevent the rally but to protect the rallyers. "It is the duty of the licensing authorities, city or municipality, to provide proper police protection to those exercising their rights to peaceable assembly and freedom of speech." Remember Dan, police-wise, you are out there not to prevent the President but to protect the people from overbyrons. "Sec. 8. Non-interference by law enforcement authorities.—Law enforcement agencies shall not interfere with the holding of a public assembly."

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

"Sec. 10. Maximum tolerance.—In every case, it shall be imperative for law enforcement agencies, when their assistance is requested by the leaders or organizers, to perform their duties always mindful of their responsibility to provide proper protection to those exercising their rights to peaceably assemble and the freedom of expression is primordial." In other words, it is the leaders of the rally who should ask for a police contingent to protect them, not to prevent their rally or to disperse them.

The police say the rallyers were being harassed from Mendiola Street, but BP 880 guarantees that the public assembly can be held in any "public place" and that "includes any highway, boulevard, avenue, road, street, bridge or other thoroughfare, park, plaza, square, and/or any open space of public ownership where the public are allowed access." Mendiola is one such space.

As for the permit that local governments give as much importance to, Sec. 4 provides that "no permit shall be required if the public assembly shall be held or made in a freedom park ... or in a private property ... or on the compound of a government-owned and -operated educational institution..."

And Sec. 15 mandates "every city and municipality in the country [sic, within an] member after the effectivity of this law establish or designate at least one suitable 'freedom park' or mall for free discussion by any person or group which, as far as practicable, shall be centrally located within the publication where demonstrations and meeting are to be held at any time without the need of any prior permit." Manila has three freedom parks: Plaza Miranda in Quiapo, Plaza Rizaldeta in front of the Post Office, and the Freedom Plaza in front of Malacañang. At last sit down, there are some in Quezon City and the other cities and municipalities that comprise Metro Manila, as well as many of the other cities and municipalities in the country. The law mandates the establishment of such freedom parks within six months of its effectivity which was in 1985. The deadline has long passed.

A permit is required if the assembly is to be held in any place other than those mentioned above, but the granting of the permit is merely ministerial. "The mayor or any official acting in his behalf shall act on the application within two working days from the date the application was filed, failing which, the permit shall be deemed granted."

The law further says: "If the mayor is of the opinion that there is imminent and grave danger of a substantive evil warranting the denial or modification of the use of the permit, he shall immediately inform the applicant who must be heard on the matter. The action on the permit shall be in writing and served on the applicant within 24 hours." The applicant may contest any adverse decision in a court of law where it must be decided within 24 hours after filing, and is immediately executory.

According to numerous rulings by the Supreme Court, the burden of proof on a "grave and imminent danger" is on the mayor who must not rely solely on his own assessment of what public safety is, power or safety are vague terms. There must be objective and convincing, not subjective or conjectural, proof of the existence of such clear and present danger of the substantive evil, in other words, to justify a denial of the application, there must be proof of such weight and sufficiency to satisfy the clear and present danger test.

The laws also provide appropriate penalties for any "public officer who directly or indirectly obstructs, defeats, violates, impedes or impairs the exercise of rights and liberties of another person."

Once more, with feeling

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I GOT A NUMBER OF TEXT MESSAGES AND e-mails from people, some of them officials of civic organizations, agreeing with my proposal to declare a holiday on the day of the rallies, when I say that People Power has shown such a story of Good vs. Evil as its underlying theme, and that a story of Evil alone, without a corresponding Good, doesn't quite do the trick. The Good in our current situation is non-election, nothing more, nothing less. The people who resisted and e-mailed me protested to press this cause before their favorite bishop, businessman and NGO leader.

I am glad people are listening, though I still wonder why people should need convincing on this. A terrible silence surrounds us. But there are still things to celebrate, and one of the best things to celebrate is heroes. Unlike Richard Nixon in "Shakespeare," I cannot produce chains of myself to be in several places at the same time. In any case, the idea is simple enough in itself; no more would those are. The more complicated a celebration is, the more likely it misses the point.

How elections are not just a benign solution to the problem, they are the only solution to the problem. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. What is the problem? The cheating. So we do not have to begin to state president ruling us. The solution is to have a legitimate president ruling us. The problem is that GMA cheated in the elections, a near universal perception as shown by the current—indeed one no longer denied even by GMA's allies. The solution is to have clean elections, not instead by revamping the Comelec, computerizing the canvassing and having foreign observers monitor the exercise.

The Evil is that we have an unelected president who is employing more and more draconian methods to keep power, which is the tail wagging the dog, every institution of society being perverted to sustain a lie. The Good is to elect a president who will restore democratic processes, which is the dog wagging the tail, allowing the various institutions of society to function as they should again.

Forget the Pulse Asia survey that says zero elections are one of the top educations of Filipinos in the current regime—they rank much higher than a council of leaders, revolutionary or not. You need no further proof than election hedge density if its software form, in the public mind. Even the most ignorant peasant knows no one thing. That is that if PPCI were elites, we would not be having this mess today. "Topa na sana ang bulong," in the local phrase goes. Things would have been over to July when the "Hello Garci" tape first surfaced.

What does this mean really? Does that mean that PPI is merely momentarily popular and would have been the perfect alternative to GMA? I suppose his popularity counts for something especially as his heroic and image was has tainted by the inspiring soul-life description which he compared himself during the elections and afterward. I was particularly impressed by the fact that even as EDSA bankrupted Ingrat and the PCSO to depict her as sole visiting arrow minister by calamity (thereby adding catastrophe to the calamity), PPI was preparing victims of relief goods for the victims of a firestorm worse in Indonesia with no labels on them to identify their source shortly before he was stricken ill and died.

But more than that, what it means is that PPI is the most universally recognized winner of the last elections. He is the elected president de jure, he is the legitimate president, he is the rightful president. The hasting hunt would have been over because the right person—by law, by God and by acclamation—would have been there.

What is the next best thing to having PPI around? New elections. New elections mean no more that the right person by acclamation is by acclamation in the interim, he shall remain. only inherit the applicant who must be heard on the matter. The action on the permit shall be in writing and served on the applicant within 24 hours." The applicant may contest any adverse decision in a court of law where it must be decided within 24 hours after filing, and is immediately executory.

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The Evil is that we have an unelected president who is employing more and more draconian methods to keep power, which is the tail wagging the dog, every institution of society being perverted to sustain a lie. The Good is to elect a president who will restore democratic processes, which is the dog wagging the tail, allowing the various institutions of society to function as they should again.

Forget the Pulse Asia survey that says zero elections are one of the top educations of Filipinos in the current regime—they rank much higher than a council of leaders, revolutionary or not. You need no further proof than election hedge density if its software form, in the public mind. Even the most ignorant peasant knows no one thing. That is that if PPCI were elites, we would not be having this mess today. "Topa na sana ang bulong," in the local phrase goes. Things would have been over to July when the "Hello Garci" tape first surfaced.

What does this mean really? Does that mean that PPI is merely momentarily popular and would have been the perfect alternative to GMA? I suppose his popularity counts for something especially as his heroic and image was has tainted by the inspiring soul-life description which he compared himself during the elections and afterward. I was particularly impressed by the fact that even as EDSA bankrupted Ingrat and the PCSO to depict her as sole visiting arrow minister by calamity (thereby adding catastrophe to the calamity), PPI was preparing victims of relief goods for the victims of a firestorm worse in Indonesia with no labels on them to identify their source shortly before he was stricken ill and died.

But more than that, what it means is that PPI is the most universally recognized winner of the last elections. He is the elected president de jure, he is the legitimate president, he is the rightful president. The hasting hunt would have been over because the right person—by law, by God and by acclamation—would have been there.

What is the next best thing to having PPI around? New elections. New elections mean no more that the right person by acclamation is by acclamation in the interim, he shall remain. only inherit the applicant who must be heard on the matter. The action on the permit shall be in writing and served on the applicant within 24 hours." The applicant may contest any adverse decision in a court of law where it must be decided within 24 hours after filing, and is immediately executory.

According to numerous rulings by the Supreme Court, the burden of proof on a "grave and imminent danger" is on the mayor who must not rely solely on his own assessment of what public safety is, power or safety are vague terms. There must be objective and convincing, not subjective or conjectural, proof of the existence of such clear and present danger of the substantive evil, in other words, to justify a denial of the application, there must be proof of such weight and sufficiency to satisfy the clear and present danger test.

The laws also provide appropriate penalties for any "public officer who directly or indirectly obstructs, defeats, violates, impedes or impairs the exercise of rights and liberties of another person."

And we expect to scare off the public with the warnings of martial law?

The challenge of Balakot

COMMENTARY

Perfecto Hocdebloy

ALONG WITH A CREW OF FACULTY, STAFF and students from the university we established, I proceeded to Balakot, close to the center of the Kashmir earthquake. This reconnaissance team, stationed on the banks of the Kunhar River, has been devastated. There a million and the pre-wrenching sound of decaying corpses. The area here is gravel, and the rubble is completely wrapped upon most of the hill. If there is a plan to clear the concrete rubble in and around the town, nobody seems to have any clue. But the Balakotis are taking it in their stride—most seem overwhelmed.

The relief effort is better relief: choppers terrific propaganda, for lesser or for worse. This is as, decisively why the Pakistani government refused an Indian offer to send in helicopters for relief work in and around Muzaffarabad, the fractured capital of Pakistani administered Kashmir. Indeed, in spite of a much-televised peace process, Pakistan refuses even to allow peace groups and activists seeking to help to the relief effort. It is still not too late to open the door and let Pakistanis, Indians and Kashmiris help each other.

The challenges are clearly. The aid remains terribly slow. There are not enough tents, blankets and warm clothes to go around. Hundreds of new cleaners have come up. Ten thousands of families remain out under the skies, facing rain and hail, and with the coming of winter, many families have lost everything but the tattered clothes on their backs. Some even lost the land they had lived upon for generations...the top soil simply slid away, leaving behind hard rock and rubble.

Worse of all, aid is not reaching those most affected. Helicopters or down-spirit communities are scattered deep in the mountains. We are talking about sending aerial drops (landing is impossible in most places). But people wind in that they advertise and the supplies land thousands of feet up or below in deep forests. Distribution is top-heavy and uncoordinated, done with little thought for area relief workers create pockets of flooded chaos from the top of trucks, causing a riot. Random shelter, the winds remain powerful.

The clock is ticking. In two months, the mountains will get their first snowfall and temperatures will plummet below zero. Millions may have two months remaining. Those without shelter will die. Time is of essence.

From a special university fund, we pledged to rebuild the homes of a dozen families. We will evacuated or more families will need homes in the Mansehra-Balakot-Kaghan area alone, not to mention the Muzaffarabad-Kashmir. The task of saving lives has barely begun.

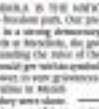
For me personally, there is a sense of déjà vu. Nearly 35 years ago, on Dec. 23, 1974, a powerful earthquake flattened towns along the then-remote Pakistan-Afghanistan border, killing thousands. I was then a young faculty member at a university town into the same mountains for similar relief work. Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had made a passionate appeal for funds around the world, had taken a token helicopter trip to the destroyed towns of Buthoni, and had left the rescue and relief work to the army and bureaucrats. Hundreds of millions of dollars in relief funds received from abroad, mysteriously disappeared. Some well-educated people believe that those funds were used to kick off Pakistan's severe nuclear program.

Will today's government do better? This will only be answered if endemic opposite themselves to play corpse-lover role for relief and rehabilitation for the long term. Civil society groups must now assert themselves. They must demand a voice in planning and implementing the reconstruction effort and, along with international donors, conspicuous and public auditing of where aid is spent.

Perfecto Hocdebloy is a professor in Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad.

Mendiola and CPR

MENDIOLA IS THE NATION'S—AND NOT JUST MANILA'S—freedom park. Our presidents have always recognized that. In a sweeping declaration, there were never fences at the crowds at Mendiola, the government and the governed understanding the value of the game. Mendiola was there as our small yet visible symbolic emotion of the nation's center of power, to vent grievances. Presidents knew that by allowing rallies in Mendiola



Michael C. Tan

they were taking the sting out of the protests. Even Ferdinand Marcos allowed rallies in Mendiola through most of his dictatorship. Only recently, and the Arroyo administration should take note, it was only in the last years of the Marcos dictatorship, as it went through its death throes, that the rallies that cracked down on Mendiola rallies.

Last month's more common incidents reminded us how Filipinos like to walk off their historic confrontation more than 20 years ago when Dona Elena Bocobo, who those have lived in her 80s, would defy the police barricades and walk to Malacañang, as defined democratic space on Mendiola as the water cannons were set and on them.

That rally was in fact an unlicensed make for balance. After Marcos fell, the bridge across Mendiola was turned after Dona Elena, who then be running in her grave now to see how some elderly citizens have become their President. Two hostages and Bishop Julio Labayen have once again tried to hold the line, only to be rebuffed by Arroyo's CPR.

After Marcos, any confrontation rallies were once again planned on Mendiola, but the fragility of our democratic institutions was such that the ineffectual Ramos in power, our rally calling for land reform. "Between peasants were killed, and more than 60 rallies were injured. The carnage was a wake-up call for the Aquino presidency, fortunately, her government listened and despite a series of sputtering coup attempts, did not fail for the administration completely.

Arroyo's CPR

Today we have a different presidency. Some people still say the Arroyo government's CPR is a legitimate way of defending democracy. I can't be as sure about that. The signs all about the new government's preoccupation—from Arroyo herself to her spokesperson Ignacio Bunye and, worst of all, "Tuesday" Secretary Raul Gonzalez—does not bode well for the word "democracy." I would dare say they have an authoritarian mind-set worse than Marcos'. Bunye had some sophistication, someone who would artfully to dismiss with many "no comments" and "I'll get back to you." Gonzalez gave us a less suave. Arroyo doesn't even try to use his glottal to fit her size. She's asking for weight and headaches she will use every stick in the book to bully her way through.

The Arroyo government is in a dilemma, aware that the Constitution makes it difficult to make an outright declaration of martial law, but those advisers know too, that the existing democratic dispensation does not favor its survival, that there will be more and more challenges in the legitimacy of the Arroyo government. Their CPR strategy takes the matter into necessarily outside limited law, but time deeper reserved against hostile forces.

The tactics only reflect the goals. Like Bush's "preemptive war" doctrine, there is no presumption of fair play here, neither can against someone on the slightest suspicion that they are up to some "mischief."

The Arroyo version of the example of Bush's preemptive war is the invasion of Iraq, which presumed Saddam Hussein was a major supporter of the al-Qaida and that he was intent on using weapons of mass destruction. Both premises have been proven wrong, but Bush continues headstrong with his preemptive offensives, dragging the whole world deeper into a quagmire.

Let's face it, even before coining the term "CPR," Arroyo has always been preemptive, from her assuming the presidency after Estrada's fall to her "hope of judgment" during the last election and even her formation with emergency powers, etc. In each, there's preemptive measures, Arroyo's preemptive moves take on deeper more political complexity.

CPR is CPR

This is where another issue with CPR is needed, and this is a kind of calibrated people's response to the government's preemptive claims of terror. Defensiveness is rewarding, seeing that it works. If it is not countered, the CPR mind-set will become more emboldened. The Mendiola incident as all protest statements from a low quarters, including the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, has done may not be enough to make the Arroyo government back off.

It's time we recognized that the Arroyo government has been put on the defensive. Their CPR is a "response" to what's going on in public spaces, mainly in the halls of Congress, on the streets and in the mass media. CPR investors by includes passive tactics, such as the rumors that another Marcos term a kind of half-hearted appeals from some media practitioners who are in control of the administration. Rumors and threats are what we use if they can help create down the volume of public protests.

In the weeks to come, there will be more calibrated moves on the part of government, as well as those of the "opposition," and good thing that the media will be tirelessly informative the public's queries and doubts.

First aid CPR

The first time I read about the government's CPR, what came to my mind was "on the pulmonary resuscitation," the first aid to the patient before to get serious treatment.

In a sense, the Arroyo government CPR, we are a patient here to take intermittent time from tired of seeing our doubt has saved and betrayed. Now, and CPR is quick and decisive, using "force" to breath life back into the body politic, to give the basic time to the standing rhythm.

The problem, however, is that the government's CPR isn't going to resuscitate the patient, with its strange use of force, the serious wounds will further have a serious harm.

In the hospital, the patient eventually dies. But can in the real world, the resuscitation nature may in fact come after again, in a different way. What is that is that Arroyo's CPR will even unduly lead to chaos and disorder.

If the Arroyo government truly understands the meaning of "traditional," they need to learn again from Mendiola. The rallies will be open Mendiola's gates for us long as democratic institutions are respected. When governments insist down democratic and open rallies, it opens the way—as Marcos did—for the crowds to eventually break to be homicidal, and end to Mendiolaing.

A new fight for the 'Rainbow Warrior'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IN THE ANNALS OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY, Greenpeace has made a name for itself for its high profile, confrontational and very controversial activities at a time of losses, years of leadership to do with peace and the environment.

And in the history of the conflict between governments and Greenpeace, perhaps none compares with the sinking, by secret agents belonging to French intelligence, of the "Rainbow Warrior" 20 years ago. While docked in Auckland, New Zealand, preparatory to sailing for the French Pacific nuclear test site of Mururoa, the Greenpeace vessel was bombed and permanently damaged. While French operatives later claimed they had tried to avoid injuries or deaths, a Greenpeace photographer, Fernando Pereira, was killed in the explosion that accompanied the second explosion aboard.

Above a decade after the bombing, the "Rainbow Warrior" was towed out to a New Zealand bay and allowed to sink to the bottom, in the location used by "Survivor" for its first show. But the British dared, the ship's remains have been transformed into a small reef, encrusted with coral and other marine life and teeming with fish and other creatures that have found in the homely hull of the historic vessel a welcome home.

But even in this transformed role, the original "Rainbow Warrior" remains under threat, not from powerful explosives and arrogant government, but from oceanic itself, to put it more accurately, from changes in climate brought on by global warming.

"Climate change Canadian crews for global warming will routinely smolder the greatest environmental threat facing the planet," states Greenpeace documentation. "Rising sea levels will flood coastal flash such as coal and oil... But it's can be warped only if we begin the massive shift away from fossil fuels and toward renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power. It is a shift that must begin not tomorrow but today."

* * *

IN THE WORLD'S arenas, global warming has remained in the "warming of sea water," says Greenpeace Southeast Asia regional energy campaigner Red Constantino. The shift in marine temperature has started a process of "sea of unbending," which kills off coral reefs, upsets ecosystems and affects the health and numbers of marine life as well. The two would be particularly acute in the Philippines, which has one of the most diverse habitats in the marine ecosystem, having between 400 and 500 species of coral, hosting between 488 species and 915 known fish species worldwide, while over a third of the 2,000 known fish species in the Philippines are "reef associated."

But global warming has begun to put the ground under the climate and weather patterns unstable. Constantino says that while there is no clear scientific proof that recent calamities, events, such as Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the US Gulf Coast, and our own bizarre unseasonal typhoons, can be attributed directly to global warming, "current scientific evidence strongly supports...that the human mind is become more destructive in certain unique ways also."

All this, a comparatively unusual phenomenon that results in weather fluctuations and drought, may also be affected by global warming, occurring more frequently and with longer durations.

"Southeast Asia is one of the most vulnerable regions in the world to the effects of climate change," says Constantino, citing the number of archipelagic countries with large areas already lying below sea level which would be inundated should sea levels start to rise. And yet, we can't, among Southeast Asian countries, "yet a more change is not a policy driver."

* * *

THAT could yet change, though. Greenpeace has identified climate change as one of its major issues, and to support the campaigns to get governments around the world to shift to using pollution sources of energy, Greenpeace has deployed "Rainbow Warrior II," a descendant of the earlier ship, to call attention to this urgent issue.

The campaign ship's first stop on its visit to the Philippines will be Cebu, where Greenpeace activists in Palawan, with support from Bacolod and Manila, students, community groups and NGOs may take advantage of "Open Seas" days on just to tour the ship's decks, which have been geared for the occasion with displays on the effects of the South Asian tsunami on the nature of global warming and other ordinary citizens can do to contribute to government to shift priorities to the development of "clean" energy.

From Oct. 21 to Nov. 1, Greenpeace will also stage a three day dive at the world-famous Tubbataha coral reef to demonstrate what is at stake in this fight against global warming. The reefs and marine sanctuary of Tubbataha are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

A campaign called "50 percent by 2050" has been launched, calling on the Philippine government to enact a policy that would ensure that 50 percent from the current ratio of less than one percent of the country's energy needs from clean, renewable and "low" sources such as the sun, the wind and modern biomass.

* * *

WHY 50 percent? Because "50 by 2050" sounded nice," joked Constantino, though he admit that the increase to 50 percent of renewable energy sources is certainly feasible and achievable by 2050. "We've seen even asking for subsidies," he adds, noting that all governments that are in the world to the efforts of climate change, says Constantino, citing the number of archipelagic countries with large areas already lying below sea level which would be inundated should sea levels start to rise. And yet, we can't, among Southeast Asian countries, "yet a more change is not a policy driver."

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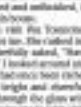
Aside from working with grassroots to push the issue, Greenpeace has also decided to tap "the power" participation of the rich and influential to hold the power of their stability and their appeal or the youth to harness public opinion behind this issue. But that's a topic for another column!

Lack of appreciation for our heritage

LOOKING BACK

Anabeth R. Quesada



AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE management and preservation of cultural heritage resources opens this month in the Rizal Library of the Ateneo de Manila University with high-powered speakers from Japan, Australia, Hong Kong and the United States. She is sincerely with a lot of last hope at risk, a gathering like this is timely and necessary for me my only reservation is that the conference is not open to the public. Only those who are invited like museum officials, chiefs and historians. The speakers will be preaching to the converted.

I have always argued that the first step in any cultural heritage plan is to make ordinary people aware of the tangible and intangible treasures in their midst. Only when they are aware will they appreciate it to a degree to preserve them. How impossible for managing any cultural heritage resources—librarians, archivists, museologists and cultural administrators are the second line of defense, and they have nothing to contend if people destroy willfully or not, what have we preserved in a library, archive or museum.

In the 25 years that I have been doing research, I have had memorable encounters and time-based experiences of heritage preservation or the lack of it. Some of my encounters bring tears, but my wife dry farmers. I used to visit the late Fr. Edilberto de los Santos, the museum curator for Bahay Nakpil-Bautista, Manila. He was the widow of Guillermo Tolentino, our first National Artist for Sculpture. Fr. de los Santos was a priest who helped me in my thesis field, the sister being Hagedorn-Valdezca, and through her stories and recollections, I was able to get to know about Tolentino beyond marble. He was a man with many facets: an accomplished guitar player, he was my thesis adviser at UP's "Well my tongue"; he was an authority on the pre-colonial Philippine script baybayin a.k.a. alibata; he was an amateur astronomer who built his own telescope; he was a prominent activist who sponsored classes in his home where he conducted trade our history for our culture.

Museum like those are often conceived in a museum or library, but before that, they must arrive our humanity, pain, flood, earthquake, war and, of course, the most destructive factor of all—people who do not realize its value.

Two decades ago when I visited the National Library director, I would park in the back or entrance because of the library where I used to see a ground-floor window that had been broken a long time, with the hole covered with a piece of narrow plywood that had a colorful painting resembling a rainbow or a star. It was only here that I found out that it was part of a mural by renowned Artist Carlos Francisco.

It was a large work measuring of 17 panels of mural, painted in 1953 and 1954, and was even reproduced in Time magazine. After the exposition, the mural was dismantled and the panels stored in the National Library where they were forgotten for many years. Today, only three panels are left, most of which remains in such deplorable state that the colors have faded (Bowood) or fat building repairs. As a matter of fact, the back of one panel had smudges of oil and a dozen circular inked, print that is once viewed as a makeshift table top. At the time the history of Philippine art was not known as it is today, no one nor even Nanoid Amos and people probably viewed this new low museum as leftover or movie sets material. What was lacking here was an appreciation of the importance of this artifact.

Another time, I found myself in a small room off the reference desk. There was a room there and the hand-written around the entire painting rarely visited. When they stopped her notebooks, I looked at the theme and discovered that books on the painting we have were covered with ancient pig skin. Some of the books were from the collection of Gregorian friars, so I asked where they came from. I was told they came from a bodega in church. Even big-box books that were no longer in use. These ancient pieces of music were used to cover the shelves of the room found.

I could cite more examples, but these are enough to acknowledge pain that we need to exercise appreciation for her heritage in everyday life.

* * *

Comments are welcome at anabeth@ateneo.edu.

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Safer to take bird flu scare seriously

THE NEWS ITEM "CAMIGUIN LIRIGS' ARRA for bird flu outbreak" (PDI, 10/18/05) jolted me. Camiguin Mayor Jerry Pelpot's efforts to mobilize the townsfolk and sound the alarm bells are commendable, but he needs help.

The consensus of experts abroad is that the occurrence of another pandemic (it would be the fourth in 84 years) is not a matter of "if" but "when." The worldwide Spanish flu pandemic in 1918 killed around 40 million; the succeeding two were not so virulent. The one coming may be a repeat of the 1918 pandemic. (It may not occur at all, but none registers before this is wishful thinking.) Incidentally, the World Health Organization primer on the bird flu says that migratory birds may be carriers of the H5N1 virus although these birds themselves, being very small, may not be affected by the virus. If this virulent strain infects the ducks in Candaba and nearby areas, the east of Central Luzon and Metro Manila will be at risk. And the consequences will be devastating in terms of human lives and economic loss for our country.

Whatever, it is better to err on the side of caution. The provincial governments of Pampanga and Bulacan, and the national government, should suppose the measures to prevent migratory birds from infecting ducks being raised by farmers around the Candaba swamp. One proposal is the banning of duck-raising in open fields, a traditional practice of duck raisers in the area who rely on the corn, rice grits and snails in the fields as feed.

For their ducks. Understandably, these farmers are protesting the move as it will affect their livelihood and income.

I made some calculations: assuming there are 1,000 farmers to be affected, each an average of 300 ducks each, and the cost of feeding these with commercial feeds comes to around P6/pcs duck per day the total cooking of all these farmers would amount to P540,000 per day for the entire area. If you multiply this by 180 days (November to early February 2006), the period when the migratory birds flow the cold regions of China and feed in the Candaba swamp), then an aggregate outlay of P98 million is needed. This is probably underrated; perhaps the farmers number 2,000 or perhaps their average stock is 200 ducks. Then the P98 million would cover only 50 percent of their feed needs.

But P50 million is less than what Bagong Silang in a day or less than a congressman's annual P70-million pork barrel. Or less than what Pampanga province probably earns from taxes on Mabuhay in a month. Pagcor or the provincial government can subsidize the feed requirements of these duck farmers during this period of extreme risk. Or maybe Central Luzon representatives can allocate P50 million each from their pork barrel, or Malacañang can use funds from its intelligence budget.

An ounce of prevention is worth a ton of cure. Our honorable government officials should think about this.

—ADRIAN E. TARNUT
enyanibot@yahoo.com

We have to move on

THIS IS A REACTION TO CONRADO DE Quiros' column titled "What happened to our democracy." His view—based on the "Hello-Garci" tapes—that Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo stole the last presidential election, and therefore has no right to lead us, is pathetic. In the column, he said that GMA is not a clear winner. On the other hand, he said there were always clear winners in the presidential elections before martial law.

Why did he not cite the Marcos vs. Cory Aquino electoral race in 1986? It was not clear if Aquino really won, still we allowed her to rule us. In the 1992 presidential race, everybody knew there was cheating, that was why Miriam Santiago filed an electoral protest against Fidel Ramos, except that it didn't prosper.

What surprises me is that he did not mention the Bonsais vs. De Venecia contest.

I think the ordinary folk are tired of suggestions that any problem can be solved by changing the President.

Who are the witnesses in the charges against GMA? Rep. Gov. Francisco Gudani. Has he allied with the opposition. Had PGI been over GMA, Gudani might have been appointed AFP's top man.

How can our democracy work if we don't respect our laws and leaders? Of course, I condemn corruption and cheating. But the accused must be accorded due process. The evidences against him or her should be strong and irrefutable.

I would rather agree with Belinda Olivares' analysis that the real ordinary people don't buy the "charges" against the President and they're too busy earning a living.

Let's move forward and work hard for the sake of our children. Why spend millions in elections only to ask the President to resign or oust her by force?

Assuming GMA of having a monopoly of corruption and being morally bankrupt is totally untrue. There are other corrupt and morally bankrupt people in the government, even in the private sectors, too. How about the politicians who are going to replace GMA? And shall we just accept them? Never mind if they are not elected? Is this not double standard?

If we continue to replace our leaders through such rule, we will never attain political stability and enjoy genuine democracy. Thank God I made the right decision and moved out of the country instead of marching to the streets again as we did in February 1986.

Please, God, save the Philippines.

—VILMA BENICIO,
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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Who's afraid of General Palparan?

CONTROVERSIAL MAJ. GEN. JOVITO PALPARAN JR., THE newly installed commander of the Army's 7th Infantry Division (ID), was hardly the picture of his notorious "Berdugo" (executioner) tag when he met with the Inquirer on Oct. 14.

Palparan, 55, peered through a pair of thick glasses that was not caught during the recent photo.

He fended off a round-table interview questions markedly through bullet phrases or—more or less.

Brought to hold a soft toast and cool tea, he spoke with genuine grace cut by hand gestures and emphasis on thoughts he deemed important. Now and then, he broke his serious look with a smile.

His "Berdugo" label, or his own description, has stuck until more recently as he returned to Central Luzon, the hotbed of old and new communist parties in the country.

In 1995, after several years in Mindanao, he assisted in Pampanga, Bataan and Zambales as commander of the Army's 24th Infantry Battalion.

Twenty years later, Palparan's comeback in Luzon evoked on the news Sunday the 7th ID that covers Central Luzon provinces as well as portions of Pangasinan and Cagayan Valley.

But today, his critics in the left-wanted could be alarming. The map appear to be a genie ground for anywhere he went, many human rights abuses on activists, civilians and communists have occurred," said the non-government chair of the Ongoing Advocacy Network (Bayan) in Central Luzon.

In Eastern Bataan and Mindoro, the group is blamed for about 300 cases of killings, disappearances and other violations in just over a month. 33 leaders and members of Bayan, Bayan and other affiliate organizations in Central Luzon have been killed. There were an open chart of the 39 killings recorded during the eight months before Palparan's assignment to the region.

Four party-list legislators last week moved to block the military's promotion to a two-star general. "It's a victory for them," Palparan wryly admitted.

Palparan, who was a product of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) and who rose from the ranks due to his valor in the battlefield, admitted not being a voracious reader of the works of Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu and communist ideologues Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. But he has been described by some of his critics as the "right man for the job."

Excerpts from an interview with Inquirer Northern Luzon Bureau correspondents Jeannette Andrade, Nestor Burgos and Maricel Cruz:

What's the situation in the area covered by the 7th ID since you assumed the post?

There were no big changes except that my arrival has been a thing on the enemy, including the militants. They take the campaign [very seriously]. I'm taken over a relief division [the 7th ID has two brigades and six battalions, with more than 8,000 soldiers under the strength of the New People's Army in the division's area is 1,500 rebels]. We are at much ratings.

How do you feel about not being confirmed [by the Commission on Appointments], and what do you plan to do to push your confirmation?

I'm just taking it easy. I'm still the commander of the 7th ID. My concern is that this is a victory of this group of anti-lawlessness. We could easily note their statements [with the CPP/NPA/Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army]. The opportunistic [element] it can have a negative effect on the military. It can slow down some of our activities. Hopefully, we can make a correct decision on

How do you answer [your] charges of being involved in the extrajudicial killings?

I'm optimistic. I'm not worried [about] its effect on me as the military service. If they can slow do to an officer, a senior general [at that]. They can do that to anyone in the AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines]. If they want to hold my confirmation because they want to shoot down our campaign in our mission, that would be a waste. I want to fight that because [what I'm doing is] for the people.

What is your reaction to being called a butcher?

It is a violation of my concepts of the mission of the military. It's a violation because out of any of our activities, they would [call] me [as] brutal criminal and a person guilty of doing illegal things. But I know myself. I respect people's rights. Madaray sabi: I give credit for what I'm doing. People are [appreciating] better lives. The situation became good to note that the AFP has liberated. So that's my satisfaction.

Are you saying you are a misunderstood soldier with the tag?

Conversely, it is also true people have the tendency to believe in the propaganda of the militants and the enemy. The enemy has the same line of propaganda. The [CPP-NPA] spokesman [Gregorio Rosal] has the same words, the same line, the same objectives. So we see a reason they can make use. The militants said the CPP/NPA. Its duty was creation to win the end war. The end war is what I am doing, what I am judged by my obligation and the people.

What's your assessment of the environment?

We've got to take the environment. We've got to learn that fighting insurgency, that you're against the communist movement because it is destructive. Hate is a very personal, professional issue).

We really consider them the enemy of the state, of the society. So we just have to declare them as such so we convey that should not exist. [The CPP-NPA] should be eradicated, it should be eliminated. I think 10 to 50 percent of the troops in our country is pretty

MAJ. GEN. Jovito Palparan Jr., 7th ID commander, talks to a cop at the Inquirer's Pagdi Dos Bonds Terry after an roundtable discussion with Inquirer correspondents.

to be blamed on the communist party.

Is it correct to call you a rabid anti-communist general?

If you want to call me that, that's acceptable ... people have called me a number of times already so it's just another [name to go].

The rebels are [also] organized in the AFP. There are some groups that [make] your stay a little bit burdensome? How do you deal with this?

Yes, it is true we are exposed to many lines and to encounters. We are in the government. We have the upper hand but we are not winning. We have to admit that. The CPP has been here for 38 years. So with this, we can't [have] a knock-do.

I'm very practical in my approach to end the insurgency is a difficult because the enemy is taking advantage of the ills of our society.

This is what we are fighting about and group that is not too big but is effective because it has an intelligence work, which is providing the information and guiding people in their various operations. This is the support system that they don't stop among the people.

What is being developed [by the military] because we have found [harassed] the rough encounters. So we have to get back the voice of the people that is to prevent any soldier to kill soldiers, not abuses, not brutal, not criminal, and that the government is not using people as their propaganda is wrong.

The second part is confidence building with the masses. We need to have the responsibility strength, appreciation, courage, determination and determination to defend the [town]. We can the protection [of the people]. We can also monitoring people to defend themselves because the soldiers, the military cannot defend our people all the time, anytime, anywhere.

Given your hard line stance against the insurgents, do you still have compassion for your enemy?

Very much. It's because I'd like to think most of these people are only victims. To

MAJ. GEN. Jovito Palparan Jr., 7th ID commander, talks to a cop at the Inquirer's Pagdi Dos Bonds Terry after an roundtable discussion with Inquirer correspondents.

are there are really no real hardliners in their conviction.

Have you ever received any direct threat from the communist party?

Direct and indirect. In the province, Cagayan Road, I don't what it's called. As Regis. He is one my comrade. So it became [a] subject, and [it] has the personal no way attack. He had said on radio and in the newspapers that he was after me head. And they're sending a number of hit men coming from Laguna, Batangas. One was arresting them from their areas. That's over did.

Human rights groups are saying that sometimes you go, you leave a trail of cases of violations.

I have come out clean. [The two cases I have been involved] There is no basis no complainant that is a real yet. Complainants have not prepared [they said the problem is my operation is legal].

Do you think this image is for an interest in the minds of your men? How do you intend to change this image?

I have no problem with my men or the AFP. We are soldiers. We are trained for this operation. So we understand each other. That's a job. The soldiers are not [encouraged to do] violations.

SLR ditches Whitehead

GUNS' FIRSTHEAD GO TO HEAT RE HEAD TO do to give Sta. Lucia a 2-1 (wins-loss) record. In fact, he would exactly shore up the Headmen's title campaign.

But with the road to beat' go to frontline and with big man Dennis Espino leading, Sta. Lucia had no choice but to sideline the rugged import for its clash with Talk 'N Text tonight in the Sunking Coffee PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

Instead White, who substituted Patrobasch during the 2002 Governors Cup, takes over Whitehead's slot, giving the Realtors added muscle in their quest for a third straight victory and a shot at being the first team to get a stake on the Phone Pals' front door.

"We want to match up not only with the frontline of Talk 'N Text but with the other bigger teams as well," said Sta. Lucia deputy coach Al Francis. Three of those teams to replace the last shooting Whitehead's with a total of 3 losses.

Whitehead, a 6-foot-5 dasher and shooter rolled into one, erupted for 22 points against the Coca-Cola Tigers in Tabuk, Lanao del Norte, and helped the Realtors defeat the Barangay Ginebra Kings more than a month ago.

But with Espino still recuperating from an injured shoulder, the Realtors need another inside-up more to complement the 6-foot-9 Marlon Aquino.

White teamed up with Derrick Brown during the elimination round of the Patrobasch Obsidian Games' title run in the 2002 Governors. White, however, was sidelined due to a knee ailment, and Sylvio Pone replaced him on the semifinals of the same tournament.

In the meantime, Barangay Ginebra moves to follow up its conquest of Red Bull Barako when the Kings go up against the Shaolin boys, Tied for third with the Realtors (2-1), the Kings are looking to collect their straight setback in the highly heated three.

—Jane Stewart

WELCOME REINVENTED: Welcome team manager Boy Lapid, club and CEO Carlo Quirado, basketball operations officer Lee Asuncion, Terry Que, Raymond Que, Caloy Garcia, Bernard Antazo and PBL chair Chito Loyzaga present the new Welcome squad.

A fighting crew, Rain or Shine, in PBL wars

By Jaroslaw W. Poya

EVEN WITH THE DEPARTURE OF KEY players Anthony Washington and Leo Isaac, perhaps one pic ranks, coach Caloy Garcia believes that his Welcome Rain Makers remain a strong contender for the 2006 Invitational Cup in the Philippine Basketball League (PBL).

"The difference this year is that we'll be relying on teamwork, rather than individual talent," said Garcia. "We also have a much deeper bench."

The reinforced squad, which will carry the new team name Rain or Shine, is gunning for a second straight title in the PBL were which fired off on Oct. 29.

The Outer Manors will continue to back on veterans Marvin Dungueria, JR Bonic, Eugene Tan, Jojo Tanghay Jay Guiling and Frantz Eric Sharla.

Beefing up their roster are La Salle's Jim Jim Gabisen, TY Tang and Frederic Vil Jamaica, Lerma's Enrique Basilio and Far Bicol's Noard Mijoral.

Team owner Raymond To also announced the appointment of former Welcome coach Leo Austria as the company's basketball operations officer.

'Lina should be the one to yield'

BAP head urged to make sacrifice so SEAG caging may be held

By Marang B. Castillo

BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines president Jose Lina should point the way for the holding of the Southeast Asian Games caging tourney by yielding to the authority of the Philippine Olympic Committee, the cabal Rep. Mercedes Paceniewilla said.

Paceniewilla, also the POC vice president, said that Lina has got the picture all wrong and cannot dictate on 10 national sports associations which established the BAP if not the local Olympic movement.

The congressman advised the former senator that he and the BAP are not the administrator of the nation by calling in international basketball federation (Fiba) secretary general Patrick Baumann and declaring that the BAP has ceased to be the national body for the sport.

Tony Garal should make sure phone call to Fiba announcing that (the) BAP has relinquished its position as the basketball body in the Philippines," Paceniewilla said. "Since we are home, let us join hands.

"This country will achieve you more for this magnanimous act."

Jay Montiza, Lina and the POC can settle the basketball issue say in the IRAE by temporarily renouncing the BAP.

"The picture (he is seeing) is all wrong," Paceniewilla added. "He cannot dictate on 10 heads of SEAs."

Sad fate for basketball Hall-of-Famer

IN HUDDLE

Beth Cielo

Wack Wack ladies off to a fiery start

VILLAROMAN

TYSON (3rd) PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan and Smart Communications head Ray Mardinez (from left) formalize the telecom giant's sponsorship recently. With them are Sy's mentee Pastor "Boy" Supyon, Smart Key Relations head Julie Carvalho and PLDT media affairs manager Butch Jimenez.

PLDT backs ace driver Sy's bid for Formula One ride

TYSON IN HELL NOT WORRY NOW ABOUT money in his chase for racing glory.

The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) has pledged support for the 28-year old Filipino driver who is running second to Fernando Alonso in the overall championship of the Asian Formula Three series.

"Sana dumuon all the support he can get," said Manuel V. Pangilinan, chair of the board of PLDT Global, Fine Charles Exon, and MediaQuest. "Pero of PLDT would like to help out with the first Filipino to Formula One in the near future and we hope that it will be him. The only way he can do that is if he has all the necessary resources."

Sy will try to beat Indian Narendra Hilanka to the second title when the AP Inspection Final race on Nov. 6 at the Batanga Racing Circuit. He will also be in the three-round Renault Challenge Cup of the Grand Prix race bound PBL race weeks later.

"Ah ano ano with Tyson in his quest to land an F1 drive in the future," said Ray Mardinez, head of Smart Communications. "We are confident that he has the skills and attitude to achieve his ultimate goal."

PLDT's sponsorship will help Carlos's Mauro Grand Prix and European Formula 3 campaigns.

Now's the time to say thank you to Luisito

CAUTION IS THE KEY AS MANNY PACquiao weighs the offer from former two-time world champion Lucisito Espinoza to work on his upcoming.

First question first: Can Luisito survive the hostile Pacquiao will attitude with the duo in its trying to head up the bi-revenge fight against Mexican ring great Erik Morales?

Both managers say the would get along well. But, exactly was the initial money awarded on by Dionisio when he heard of Espinoza's offer to be part of his training staff for the Morales rematch.

It was Pacquiao's right to ask. If he, for example, ends up pulling his punches to save Luisito from visible harm, that part of the promotional procedure would be a total fraud.

Pacquiao said with pedal cause. He definitely needs all the solid support he other has learned on the biggest fight of his rich career.

Of course, whether Luisito would be not Luisito would be up to the Jack, Pacquiao did not share the fact that Espinoza, now stranded in a friend's garage in California after being abandoned by his wife, has also been considered penniless.

Final fact: Luisito is no that Pacquiao, other than buy Luisito a shorter seat at the Staples Center on Sept. 25, when three Filipino boxers turned out a historic 3-for-3 knockout masterpiece in California, later fished out a bundle of green bucks to send off Espinoza.

Bring on the receiving end of a knockout artist's fury, needless to say, is one the greatest ways to court a little.

If Luisito is by Pacquiao, Luisito would be reduced to a punching bag, long after his prime days inside the ring are over.

Of course, following the one-for-All for-one world boxing king look into the brutal business, his backers claimed Luisito could be of great help to Pacquiao technically.

But only a Luisito in full or Muhsin. He could lend Pacquiao some deep secrets of the body, unlike previous operatives.

But should those archrival fight types be reason enough to expose Luisito to what Pacquiao has called real dangers?

These attorneys of the former champ should be summoned to the quick.

Now the way they sounded, those friends who have been trying to peddle Luisito to Team Pacquiao seemed to have no other choice. They just have to help Luisito. Period.

Now, this is not the case with a group that has lined up a stellar fight card to raise funds for Luisito Espinoza's legal battle against those who cheated him of his undefeated pro pugilistic record in defeated the world featherweight title in Stockholm in 1998.

Bernabe Fabricio, who discovered and developed Espinoza into a world champion, could not aptly express his gratitude to people like Gus Abaya Pilod of North Columbus and Joe Bubba, a Filipino cop in San Francisco, California, who came into an Luisito's rescue and against Pedro Diaz who behind the unrelated "Fight for Love" whose proceeds would go to Espinoza.

Said Pilod: "I'm sure there'll be no testimonials or a grand 'arbitration party' when Luisito comes home from the United States for the protection of his benefit at the San Andres Dole and Sports Arena in Manila."

But, Pilod added, Luisito will return to the arms of people who genuinely love him.

The benefit, slated on Oct. 29, features a Philippine championship and five other bouts involving top fighters from Pilod's hometown Manila against nationally rated rivals.

Pilod said they were targeting at least P500,000 in proceeds, with the help of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza who has lost the use of one and also retired file-style measurements.

Bubba is in the forefront of moves to have Luisito be present during the stellar event. Tickets for the ringside attraction were not withheld. He got passed.

Finally, final time to honor Luisito, who has given the Philippines many proud moments in the international boxing stage, by coming to the fight.

It's a way of assuring the gifted sports hero, who has risked his life in the name of national glory that the Filipino still knows how to say thank you, despite the widespread oppression, runaway lying and corruption pervading in our post-divided nation.

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Bayan Muna Tarlac office burned

TARLAC CITY—ARMED MEN burned the Tarlac headquarters here of the party-list group Bayan Muna early yesterday, police said.

Reports said between 11 and 12 suspects, who were armed with portable rifles, went to the Bayan Muna office at Sitio Sasa in Barangay Matatalaib in this city at 1 a.m. Sunday, doused the office with gasoline and threw a molotov cocktail there to start a fire.

Only the front part of the two-room bungalow that Bayan Muna has been occupying was burned as residents in the area immediately put out the fire. Some pieces of office furniture were also burned.

Bantan Police Sr. Supt. Alyansang Makatarungan chair in Central Luzon, said soldiers under Maj. Jovito Palparan Jr., chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, were suspected to be behind the attack.

The burning happened two days after Victoria Collantes, Bayan Muna secretary general in Tarlac, was shot dead on Saturday in Gerona, north of the city.

Collantes' slaying, the second attack on a Bayan Muna leader in Tarlac this month, was also blamed on Palparan.

'We have the authority to terrorize the bad elements of society'

Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, commander, 7th Infantry Division, Philippine Army, Sept. 19, 2005

But Palparan denied any hand in the attacks.

"I have nothing to do with the burning [of the Bayan Muna office]," he said.

He said if necessary, the Army would assist in the investigation. "If my men were involved, we will cooperate," he said.

Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, who went to Tarlac on Tuesday to attend the wake of Collantes and inspect the damages on the party's office, said this was the second Bayan Muna headquarters burned by arsonists this year.

He said it was not a coincidence that Palparan was the area commander in the town where the attacks took place.

Ocampo said initial assessments revealed a similar pattern when their office in Gubatanga, Samar, was burned in April this year, when Palparan was Army commander in Eastern Visayas.

Ocampo called the attacks on Bayan Muna and other progressive groups as "political repression masquerading as counter-insurgency and antiterrorism operations."

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo assigned Palparan as Central Luzon "with a purpose," despite the general's record of alleged human rights violations.

Ocampo, in a separate statement, urged national and local authorities to "ensure the safety of Bayan Muna leaders, members and offices from further terrorist attacks."

"We may be critical of the government but we do not deserve to be left unprotected from those who seek to harm and liquidate us," he said.

As toward to continue opposing Palparan's promotion now pending before the Commission on Appointments. "Palparan should be removed from Central Luzon because he left bloody hoax in the region," Ocampo said.

But Palparan said the military would not be considered the only suspect behind the attacks on Bayan Muna members because the group had created its own enemies.

"Sabi [the] whereabouts with the New People's Army is not a secret and the NPA has killed and burned people's lives and properties," he said. With reports from Jerome Aning in Manila and Russell Brainio, PDI Central Luzon bureau

BOUNTY
A fisherman takes a bite out of a freshly caught fish while his companions harvest fish from their net in Barangay Cabcaben, Mariveles, Bataan, on Monday. Fishermen in the area are reaping a bountiful harvest of fish, squid and shrimp. (Photo by Jay Morales)

Ordeal not over for kidnap victims

CUYAPO CITY—The Abcede family of North Cotabato remains traumatized although overjoyed with the freedom of their four-year-old Ralph Ashley Abcede.

Ralph, who was kidnapped by his nanny Hazel Paala, on Sep. 23 from their home in Kidapawan City, was abandoned by the Pescagan gang when Mora Ishirat, Moroism Front (MILF) members raided the group's hideout in Kidan sa Sarangani, Maguindanao on Oct. 5.

The reason for the family's continued worry was that the nanny remains at large. After the abduction, Ishirat, a member of the Special Action Force (SAF) of the MILF, was arrested by the police.

Ralph's grandparents Ed Salvado said they learned that before Ralph Ashley was freed, the kidnapper has already in its custody the whole paraphernalia.

"Mr. Abcede had a contact with the kidnappers of his grandson. At 10 Sept. 28, their contact called him through the mobile phone and directed him to go to Kidan sa Sarangani because they will turn over to him the boy," Salvado said.

Alert

He said the 46-year-old Abcede was under a certain Mr. Lim during that time.

"They went to agreed house after that and Mr. Abcede asked our troops in the area to help in the rescue operation," he said.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmylou "Lala" Taliño urged other officials in Central Mindanao, particularly Sultan Kudarat Gov. Suharto Mangudadatu, to help in the safe recovery of the two victims.

Police said there has been no word from the Pentagon yet regarding the condition of the hostage.

Major Gen. Ismo Argos of Sobel in Sarangani said he has not monitored any unusual activity in his town for the past weeks.

But he pledged to help in the rescue of the remaining two were brought in his town.

The Pentagon has been conducting a search several Mindanao, including Regions of Cotabato and General Santos, after it went on an abduction spree on Oct. 5. With reports from Tarpo Jadan

Subic Bay pollution seen to reach Manila Bay proportions

By Patrick Roxas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

OLONGAPO CITY—SUBIC BAY IS HEADING the possibility of suffering the same fate as the highly polluted Manila Bay if waste discharges and other pollutants threats since the last two months, according to a Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority official, quoting results of a study on the bay pollution, said.

The official, who asked not to be identified pending the official release of the results, said waste discharges from households and factories in Olongapo City and Subic Bay Freeport are rapidly accumulating in Subic Bay.

He said the government's blueprint on the pollution could result in the rapid pollution of the bay.

"What this means is that in the next 10 years, we could be seeing a new polluted Subic Bay," the SBMA official said.

"The population of Olongapo and the nearby Subic Freeport continues to grow. While we observe a diminishing water supply, what's more alarming is that there is no effort to put up a comprehensive sewerage system for the city or such that all wastes and discharges end up in the waters of Subic Bay," he said.

When one goes around the bay in a boat, "you'll see the amount of trash that has accumulated in the bay waters mostly coming from the river channels in the city," he said.

The official said the Subic Water and Sewerage Co. Inc. (Subicwater) has yet to provide a sewerage system for the city, although its franchise agreement gave it the right, privileges and authority to provide water and sewerage services both in the freeport and in Olongapo.

"Technical studies have shown that Subicwater has yet to invest in sewerage infrastructure in the city of Olongapo," he said.

Subicwater officials said the continuing population of the bay is a growing problem, but said the preparation of a comprehensive sewerage master plan for the city is ongoing and will be finished before the end of this year.

The plan, according to them, will provide a blueprint for the construction of sewage facilities and will include an assessment of the residents' willingness to pay for such a service.

"At present, city residents are just paying for water services and relating to 'outfit' to collect sewerage fees is difficult to ensure its costs has been difficult," James Garcia, Subicwater assistant general manager, said.

Subicwater is a joint venture of the SBMA, Olongapo City government, DM Consunji Inc. and Benpres Conrad, a British firm.

Its franchise included implementing a sewerage system for the two areas.

A former US military facility, the freeport has an existing sewerage system while Olongapo has none.

Garcia said the franchise that they have communicated a study for the implementation of a sewerage system for Olongapo and a final report is expected before the yearend.

"Based on their team conducted on the bay waters, the consultants found the capability of our receiving water (Subic Bay) is encouraging," Garcia said.

New chance given for entry of shrimp variety

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

DAGUPAN CITY—THE CONTROVERsial ruminants (Swills) white shrimps got one more chance at being introduced to the country when another batch of brood stock was brought in the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources for breeding purposes.

BFAR Research Center chief Wendy Rosario said the new brood stock was given a clean bill of health by the bureau and allowed to be brought to the Philippines when samples were found disease-free by the University of Arizona in the United States.

"We assure [the public] that there are no health problems such as those associated with the first batch. Everything was done to assure that the stocks are not contaminated, like bringing them from Hawaii through a direct flight. At the center, all researcher measures were done as the last time," Rosario said.

In April this year, the BFAR destroyed some 900 breeders of white shrimps (Penaeus vannamei) brought from Hawaii by a private company after the stocks were found to be positive of some shrimp diseases.

Rosario said the new stocks, which were imported from the Rosa Sea Shrimp Resources in Hawaii, were certified by the University of Arizona as being free from nine pathogens (bacteria and viruses).

The University of Arizona is the recognized reference diseases diagnostic laboratory of the US shrimp consortium.

Each of the 1,087 breeders (548 males and 617 females) has a certificate of free disease.

The breeders were imported by the Aquaculture World Inc., the same company that imported the first batch. But BFAR and the company entered into a memorandum of agreement that called for the company to shoulder all expenses for the breeding program and the BFAR to extend technical assistance.

"From the breeding program, we will be developing an industry for the fishermen. Ginumang could be the third most important species that will be cultured in the country next to Bangus and tilapia," Rosario said.

He said the BFAR would start field testing the culture of ruminant in different areas of the country. The BFAR and Agriculture World will still license to accredited fishermen who must comply with laws and environmental regulations.

The result of the field tests will be the basis of a decision whether the prohibition on the importation of ruminant for culture in the country will be lifted.

After several experiments and the ruminant industry from the experimental, and if successful, it will be in Dagupan where all industry of ruminant will start," he said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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DA to push through windmill tests

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Despite claims by militant organizations here that the use of windmills for farm irrigation would not work, the Department of Agriculture (DA) is pushing through with testing windmills in southern Pampanga.

Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban announced during a dialogue on Wednesday in nearby Mexico town that windmills would be tested in running irrigation pumps.

Earlier, Francisco Mangulabnan, chair of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan-Pampanga, said although they support the use of windmills, such environmentally-sound technology will work only in windy provinces like Aurora and Quezon.

"Pampanga is not a windy place. Windmills work only in windy places ... I have seen many windmills that do not work because of the absence of strong winds," he said.

Panganiban said the construction and operation of windmills would be in accordance with Malacañang's thrust for the public and private sectors to tap alternative, cheaper energy sources.

He said the use of windmills is a joint project of the DA and the Philippine Rice Research Institute based in the Science City of Muñoz.

Aside from windmills, the government is pushing for the use of alternative fuel like biodiesel and ethanol. *Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Man with a gun seen on video boosting Palace stand

By Christine O. Avendaño

A MAN WITH A GUN CAUGHT on video as police were busing down a protest rally near Mendiola last week is provoking questions from those who believe the government is out to Malacañang in its efforts to justify its crackdown on dissenters and plaster angry mobs down critics.

The footage showed the man in a white shirt carrying an umbrella moving forward as policemen were spraying water into the demonstrators. He was seen dropping his bandgun, then picking it up and darting back to the crowd of demonstrators in tears.

Police officials led by Director General Arturo Lomibao commissioned the police report on Friday's incident, including the video footage, to President Macapagal-Arroyo and her Cabinet yesterday.

In the meeting at Mal, the President directed police to identify the man and to release the footage to media, said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita.

"She said, 'Let's show the footage to the people to show that the actions of the police were not unjustified," Ermita told reporters.

Ermita said that he hoped the footage would be out on television so that everyone would view them, including the bishops and even El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde.

"We hope that the bishops and Brother Mike would understand that the flames were a reason why the incident happened," Ermita said.

Former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Sen. Jamby Madrigal, Rep. Satur Ocampo, Bayan Organizer Anjanette Antonio Tobias and John Xavier Labayen, and left-wing groups and priests led the procession near Mendiola. They had come from Plaza Miranda for a prayer rally that was to end at the San Beda Chapel. No violence has been seen reported in the police crackdown.

On Monday, Velarde, the President's spiritual adviser, joined the bishops in condemning the water attack in his first criticism of Mrs Arroyo. Velarde warned that the crackdown on dissenters was fueling political instability that began in June over allegations Mr Arroyo and her husband rigged the 2004 election.

Last month, Mr Arroyo escaped an impeachment attempt in Congress.

National Capital Region Police Office chief Director Vidal Quezol said the shooter was reported why a man coming from the center of the procession was carrying a gun.

Quezol accused that under Batas Pambansa Blg. 880, policemen are not allowed to carry guns in a rally and this should be the case for demonstrators as well.

"Before we can start to investigate we want to know who is this man," Quezol said.

"My appeal to the leaders of the rally is to tell us who is this person?" he said, saying it is their responsibility.

All the police brass, Quezol said, was that the man came from the "rowdy" ranks of demonstrators, not from the Gutierrez's flanks.

Quezol declined to identify the man who provided the video for security reasons. But he also acknowledged that some policemen were blamed the events.

Also yesterday, Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong said the Manila police was set to file criminal charges against leaders of Pro-Bayan's protest rally. He said police would arrest organizers to suppress violence and illegal assembly and violations of city ordinances against chaos.

Ocampo, leader of the leftist Bayan Bisma, said that if the Police were making an issue out of the armed man, he could say that there were many instances that the police violated the no-gun policy on rallies. He said in a rally on Oct. 4 rally near Mendiola he had confronted a policeman carrying an M-16 rifle. Which report is from Ed C. Cabucungan Jr., Marjorie C. Ortiz, Tina G. Santos, Blanche S. Rivera and Carlo F. Gomez, PDI Visayas bureau

'Twas Jamby's bodyguard

By TJ Burgonio

OPPOSITION SEN. JAMBY Madrigal had eight and that the man caught on video with a gun during last Friday's rally rigged and was her bodyguard.

Madrigal said that Bry Hatade was one of two body guards who accompanied her to the prayer rally on Friday. He said Hatade was assigned by the Senate to her security detail.

"During the dispersal, I was trampled upon. I got pinned down under the bodies. So he (Hatade) went through the crowd to rescue me. That's when the gun fell," she said in an interview. "He was just there to help me get up. Any decent man would have done that."

The senator said she had handed up her security after getting death threats since she started her campaign against illegal logging and mining.

Asked if she would bring Hatade to the police, Madrigal said: "They should tell me what law to face in claim). Because it seems we're living under martial law."

"This is a free country. Why did they release the footage three days after the rally?" she said. "This is nothing but a Marcosian tactic to intimidate someone like me who is fighting for the truth."

It's final: VAT law legal; takes effect Nov. 1

The VAT law allows the President to raise the tax rate to 12 percent in January next year from the existing 10 percent. It also increases the corporate income tax from 32 percent to 35 percent in the three years.

Exemptions lifted

Other previously VAT-exempt products and services now covered by the tax include coal, national gas and petroleum products; fuels; electricity cooperatives; highway toll fees; domestic air and sea transport; medical and legal services; seminars; certain meals and non-food agricultural products; and works of art, jewelry, metals and mounted semiprecious stones.

Malacañang welcomed the Supreme Court decision.

Presidential Secretary Margarito "Gary" Teves said the approval allows the government to "move forward." The VAT law would help the government put its fiscal house in order and promote a better economic environment.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Malacañang would implement the law "in accordance with the possible room at the time of the lingering political crisis. The government insists the tax measure is place profitably before the year ends.

Expect more rallies

"We are prepared for more rallies, especially with the implementation of the VAT. We're confident that with proper information dissemination, the public will come to understand the need to raise taxes," Ermita said.

He appealed to the government's critics to give the new tax a chance. "Medicines are now cheaper in almost every, just like VAT," Ermita said.

The opposition dismissed the SC's ruling. "This is a sad day for Filipinos. There will be a marriage of two crimes—the political and economic," Teofisto Guingona, Jr., Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo said.

"This is a deadly combination," said Ocampo, one of two members of the House minority who filed a bill seeking to repeal the VAT law.

Former Minority Leader Francis Escudero, one of those who sought an injunction against the VAT law, expressed disappointment in the Supreme Court, and we added last October was the last thing Filipinos needed during those times when oil prices were at an all-time high and workers' minimum wages have yet to be increased substantially.

"This is only highlighting the insensitivity of the government," he said.

Salary increase

But the chair of the House committee on appropriations said the new law would guarantee the needed resources for the administration's budget for 2006.

Rep. Simeon Kimilat said the

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Boy meets alleged kidnappers

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN SEVERAL months, a three-year-old Filipino-Chinese boy came face to face with his alleged kidnappers, including sister and former congressman Dennis Roldan, at the Pasig City Regional Trial Court yesterday.

ROLDAN

The boy cried when he saw his alleged abductors seated on the front row. "Ayaw ko na. Ayaw ko na," (No more, no more), he told his father as he shook his head, reserving his face with both hands.

Prosecutors tiffany PDEA Christine Prado, of the Police Anti-Crime and Emergency Response, said she saw the boy inside the alleged safe house of Roldan's group during a raided house operation. "He is still scared," said Roger Yu, the victim's father.

The prosecution presented yesterday a surveillance video Prado made on Feb. 18 of a house on Jamboanga Street, West Fairview, Quezon City. The video showed the victim taking a bath with two other boys assisted by accused Noel Sac Andres and his wife Rowena. Prado introduced the testimony of Senior Insp. Alden Asensio, another Peze operative, who said earlier that Roldan entered the house on the afternoon of Feb. 17. But Roldan's lawyer, Brigitte Portuz, asked why Prado had not submitted written reports of her surveillance mission. Prado said she sent the information by text message to her superiors who were the official report. Apart from Roldan (real name: Maribel Gundaod and the Sun Andres couple, four others had been charged with kidnapping, including Ronnie Sevagada, Adrian Domingo, and Octavio Esteves. Roldan's alleged girlfriend, Joanne Wong, also suspected to have masterminded the kidnapping with the actor, remains at large.

BEHEADED
Beheaded on wooden planks, workers check out a newly-installed electronic billboard in Guadalupe, Makati City. AFP/JOEL

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METROBRIEFS

Deadly fall

BEFORE the dus. Louie Ever Grand Mall at Epifil'a mezzanine deadline Monday night. After he boy-watched Rhenalo Bonifio, Jr. pill up Bir Bonifil Rizon said allegedly jumped off. Huerto, 31, crashed on the ground floor, shocking shoppers who were going out of the mall. Criminologist chief Supt. Gilbert Cruz said. Security guards noticed the victim on the Antong Rodriguez Medical Center in Marikina City, but he died en route to the hospital. Police said they found letters to the victim from his co-worker, the Mario Diwa Bonifio Learning Center, inside his bag. The letters, reportedly asked Bonifio to explain 441 pairs of shoes worth P800,000 which were misappropriated by, and also asked for his resignation. Catalina Pedro de Guzman, 27, committed suicide by allegedly cuts of suicide. A investigation is ongoing to determine if the victim had "any connection to the alleged scandal," the report added. **Edwin C. Tandoy Jr.**

Cheap movies

MUNTINLUPA in Manila have until today to submit the blueprint for construction of their own cheap movie theaters. The city government decided to adopt the policy of Manila to draw big-spender, "We need to encourage more moviegoers, especially students, to watch quality films and not those one-week ones. This is the way of helping the local film industry especially in these trying times," Atienza said, adding that he envisions opening the first theater of the city's own by January. The eight-local films that are found in the 15-day run of Cine Manila are "Ma'Rosa," "Mr. Fotbol," "Ang Babae Sa Septic Tank," "Tuhog," "Tulad," "Cain," "Sanggre," "Bilis," "Tatsulo," "Lola" Mo'Rosa, Mark, Luke and John," "Will She Remain "Babaying may Pelikula ng Pilipino." Consequently aims to stop giant multinational movie companies from unjustly forcing Filipino artists to work as local dubbing and scripting filmmakers. But the industry's administration, the City Council is reduced to a minimum Lucas Bersamin, 30, is "in general." "Sine mayors said the new movie will improve on top the lives of theater owners should move under the proposed to plant trees at prices for local movies. **Tina E. Santos**

Missing boy found

POLICE yesterday found the body of an 11-year-old boy who was reported missing since last Monday after he and his friends decided not to continue swimming at Manila Bay City. The body of Mark Anthony Bernardino was discovered at about 9 a.m. on Sta. Ana, Manila. Bernardino's mother, Rosalinda Bernardino, identified the body of her son. He added that Mark's friends, Bernardino's body was identified by his pal who, he added. The body of Marlan Ortiz's friend John Ray Mandrel, 10, was found earlier that day. A witness Pampang Ortiz to Manila the other day. He told the police and Mandrel were playing on the beach. Ortiz said were across Shore Boulevard from Bay Mandrel, 10, the bright of heavy rains. The two children were not found submerged in the water. Ortiz said. Ortiz

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Peso gains on high court's VAT ruling

Gov't posts budget gap of P27.7B

By Michelle V. Remo

AFTER POSTING A SURPLUS OF 91.7% billion in August, the national government incurred a budget deficit of P27.7 billion in September, exceeding by P2.8 billion the P24.9 billion ceiling set for the month.

The Bureau of Treasury said revenues collected during the month reached P128.8 billion while expenditures amounted to P87 billion.

It source said the deficit was brought about by higher-than-programmed spending during the month rather than weak revenue collections.

Instead of spending only P83.4 billion as programmed, government disbursements during the month reached P87 billion due to the increase in subsidies to state-owned firms and allowance for local government units.

Data showed that allowance to LGUs increased to P15 billion from P11.9 billion in the same month last year, while

cont'd on

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE LIFTING BY THE Supreme Court of the temporary restraining order on the expanded value added tax (VAT) law yesterday cheered the financial markets, perking up the peso to a two-month high of 55.67 to $1 before closing at 55.78.

Hits 2-mo high before closing at 55.78 to $1

However, some quarters said the appreciation was but a knee-jerk reaction. The peso gained from Monday's finish of 55.815, outperforming other Asian currencies.

It opened at 55.84 and surged to 55.67 on the favorable news about the VAT, however, gave up some gains towards the closing of the trading period. The total volume traded at the Philippine Dealing System stood at $247 million.

"If the lifting of the 70% on NET was taken positively by the market as it reaffirms the government's commitment to fiscal reforms," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

"I think the trend is still positive for the peso especially because the market is expecting more foreign inflows," said Asia Emerging Islands, president of hedge exchange association ACI Philippines.

He said remittances from migrant workers were expected to come in this month for the second semester tuition fee payments. But given the lingering political uncertainties, Hilado said the peso-appreciation would likely be limited.

"Only when the political noise is

PESO A2

Shares close flat

SHARE PRICES CLOSED FLAT yesterday as investors kept to the sidelines, awaiting a Supreme Court decision on a vital tax law, analysts said.

[The decision lifting the temporary restraining order on the expanded value-added tax law was announced in the afternoon, after the trading.]

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index fell 0.12 points to 1,347.23 after trading between 1,343.91 and 1,349.81.

Volume turnover was 291.21 million shares worth P498.24 million. The all-shares index gained 1.14 points to 1,180.82.

Losers outnumbered gainers 27 to 23, while 81 stocks were unchanged.

"Everyone is waiting for the news on the expanded VAT," said Rizalito del Castillo of First

cont'd on B3

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Mactan airport raising P600M for upgrade

By Carlwas S. Satine

MACTAN-CEBU INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS planning to borrow P600 million from local banks to finance the immediate upgrading of its facilities so it can be completed in time for the Asian Ministers' summit in the Visayas capital next year.

Adulberto Yap, general manager of Mactan Cebu International Airport, said the airport needed an additional parking ramp, two overhead air bridges, two flight-void ramps 30 by meters and an overhaul of the runway.

"The Asian Ministers' summit is scheduled to be held here in Cebu on Nov 4 next year and we need the immediate upgrading of the airport in time for this event," said Yap in an interview.

Yap said the agency had been entertaining proposals from creditors such as the Development Bank of the Philippines, the Land Bank of the Philippines, the Philippine Veterans Bank, Union Bank of the Philippines and Philippine National Bank.

He said the passenger rates and X-ray machines would cost roughly P600 million while the four-hectare aircraft parking ramp and the overlay of the runway would cost about P1.00 million each.

The Cebu Mactan International Airport completed two months ago the P120-million improvement of its runway. It also purchased nine brand-new X-ray machines.

Yap said the existing four air bridges could no longer accommodate the increasing number of flights landing and taking off from Cebu.

"We need P600 million for the immediate upgrade of the airport. This is different from the long-term expansion that we are planning," he said.

He said the agency would need about P3 billion to finance the construction of a new passenger terminal in the next three years to cope with the rising demand. From about 2.5 million passengers last year, the Cebu airport is expecting to handle 5 million passengers in five years.

The banks, he said, had offered to lend money for the terminal upgrade. Yap said the agency would choose the most attractive offer among the lenders.

"We have internal funds as we may not have to borrow the entire amount. It really depends on how good the terms we would be," he noted.

Flights to the Cebu airport has been steadily increasing, according to its general manager.

Philippine Airlines is scheduled to resume flights four times weekly to Guangzhou, China from Cebu before the end of the year, said Yap.

He said Qatar Airways, which is the only airline servicing the PHX/DOH Pair route (Clark-Hong Kong), would also increase new flights to the quarter.

SIA Air, a unit of Singapore Airlines, wants to double its flights to Cebu as this is one second direct flights to the Visayas capital instead of its current Singapore-Davao-Cebu route.

Petrochem group opposes planned tariff cut on resins

BRINGING DOWN THE TARIFF RATES ON resins could trigger the collapse of the entire petrochemical sector of the country, and spook more than $1 billion in investments in two proposed naphtha crackers and another $150 million in two resin plants that are being rehabilitated, the Association of Petrochemical Manufacturers of the Philippines (APMP) said.

APMP said in a statement that government's plan to reduce the tariff on resins from 10 percent to 5 percent was untimely especially because the private sector had been heavily investing to build strategic plants that would make the country self-reliant and, hence, no longer a hostage to foreign suppliers.

Resins are the raw materials for consumer and industrial products such as packaging, furniture, cranes, pails, and tables.

"Bringing the tariff down not under certain while projects to integrate the industry are being implemented," said Tomoyuki Ikeda, president of Philippine Resins Inc., the statement issued by APMP.

PRI is the country's largest and most modern PVC resin plant. Ikeda fears that his company's operations as well as its second PVC line expansion and backward integration projects would be "significantly" affected by the planned tariff reduction.

The $150-million rehabilitation of the petrochemical plants in Batangas might also suffer, APMP said.

But the biggest impact would be on the two proposed naphtha crackers worth more than $1 billion that JG Summit Petrochemical Corp. and PHGC Petrochemical Development Corp. would put up separately.

Wilfredo Paras, APMP chair and JGSPC executive vice president, said: "There is no point to subsidize tariff support at the very time when the end-user industry needs it while the naphtha cracker is on the verge of realization. It is during the development and transitional phase that the tariff cover is necessary, not when integration has been fully achieved."

QUEEN MOHY MAQUIA (seen left), president of St. Paul University Philippines in Tuguegarao, Cagayan, confers upon Louis C. Tan a doctoral degree in Business Management, Honoris Causa in recognition of his business and management skills, leadership, philanthropy and exemplary contributions to the economic development of the Philippines. With them are Virginia Bauermeister (2nd from left), Region II director of the Commission on Higher Education, and the laguet's wife, Carmen R. Tan (right).

Peso gains . . .

(Continued on B2)

point will we see the peso breaking out of the range of 55.30-56.51," Alfaro said.

Banco de Oro Universal Bank chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said: "What is critical is a substantial close below the 55.67-55.70 level to initiate a rising peso until the end of the year."

RTB Fim Ong Securities economist Leo Lontoyo said the delayed implementation of the VAT law would likely have a lower impact on the government's fiscal position this year compared to the original forecast.

"From the potential P26 billion in additional revenue in July the anticipated tax take from the suspended VAT law have reduced substantially due to the delay," Lontoyo said.

And it been implemented in Oct. 1, the potential revenue would have already dwindled to P3 billion, she said.

"Yes, the national government's fiscal position has continually improved this year despite the delay in the VAT law implementation. This was because revenues slight ly exceeded the overall target while interest payments were lower than expected," Lontoyo said.

She noted that the new administration measures, in addition to the impact of the six tax law, had helped improve revenues and that the fiscal picture has greatly improved even at the consolidated level.

The broader sales tax, designed to boost the chronically weak state revenues, was frozen on July 1, hours after it came into force due to legal reasons.

The Supreme Court ruled last month that the tax was constitutional but kept the TRO in its implementation up to yesterday.

20-yr T-bond rate pegged at 12.125%

By Michelle V. Remo

INTEREST RATE FOR THE 20-year Treasury bond sale was kept at 12.125 percent during yesterday's auction.

Investors displayed strong appetite for the government's long-term debt instrument by placing high volume of bids.

The 20-year bond also fetched a coupon of 12.125 percent in its last auction held in April this year.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the huge amount of tenders for the 20-year bond was an indication the credit market was gaining confidence in the government's long-term fiscal prospects.

The primary market for the 20-year bond is composed mainly of banks and insurance companies.

"It shows the engagement of the market and speaks of long-term confidence of investors," Cruz said in a press briefing after the auction.

The 20-year bond was highly oversubscribed, with tenders reaching P7.4942 billion, compared with the government's debt offering of only P4 billion.

The Treasury's auction committee decided to accept P4 billion worth of bids, thus raising the borrowing schedule in full amount.

Cruz said that market confidence is also shown not only in the government's long-term prospects but also in the short term, as reflected by decreasing interest rates on short-term Treasury bills.

In the auction for T-bills last Monday, investor rate declines across all maturities, with the benchmark 91-day T-bill rate fetching a rate of 5.810 percent, or 5.9 basis points lower than the previous.

Creation of special trade office pushed

By Christine A. Gaylican

A BILL CREATING THE PHILIPpine Trade Representative Office, which will head a multi-sectoral negotiating panel in all trade talks involving the country, has been filed in the House of Representatives.

Trade Bill No. 4798 will stop the run-of-the-mill problem among line agencies participating in bilateral and multilateral trade talks," Rep. Lorenzo R. Tañada III said in a briefing yesterday.

This bill was filed by Tañada early this month and endorsed by five other congressmen—Representatives Romualdo B. Zamora of Iloilo, Jose Carlos G. Cuenco of Mandaluyong City, Prospero Alcala of Quezon City, and party-list Representatives Emmanuel Joel J. Villanueva and Mario Aguja.

The Trade Representative Office will take the lead in negotiating for trade agreements under the World Trade Organization, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Free Trade Agreement), as well as bilateral trade and investment agreements with other countries.

"The combined impact of all these agreements has yet to be appreciated as there is no single country principally responsible for monitoring and coordinating a cohesive and coherent trade policy that is the true national interest," Tañada pointed out.

"The Philippine Trade Representative Office will harmonize the whole process," Tañada said.

The proposed measure provides that the trade office will operate under the guiding principle of coordination with all of the relevant sectors and ensuring their representation in trade negotiations.

The trade office, which is expected to establish coherence, greater predictability, accountability and transparency in trade and investment policy making, was proposed to be placed under the Office of the President.

Tañada said that under the existing system, the Department of Foreign Affairs was considered the final negotiator and even the signatures in trade agreements although it was familiar with the details of the deals.

"The secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry is the lead negotiator even if the subject of the negotiation is agriculture," he added.

In the meantime, Rep. Mario Aguja said endorsers of the bill were asking Malacañang to certify the bill as urgent as it could be passed in no more than a year and a half.

Tañada said that a similar bill would be filed in the Senate by senior Sen. Francisco Pangilinan on Oct. 31 or from B.

Better press overseas

THE PHILIPPINES AND GLORIA MACAPAGAL Arroyo seem to be getting more sympathetic coverage from overseas business publications than from the local rag sheets.

"Manila mood shifts; Arroyo lessens as bad, get clear runway," read the Page 1 blurb of The Wall Street Journal Asian edition on Monday, incidentally the paper's very first issue in our part-era rather than the usual breakfast.

"The Philippines has taken a lot of lumps but positive signs out," was the headline of the "Heard in Asia" column that the Page 1 blurb referred to. The "Heard" column is a regional takeoff from the parent US newspaper's popular "Heard on the Street" feature.

It quoted Thomas Crouch, the Asian Development Bank's country director for the Philippines, as saying her is "tired of talking here and talking negatives. The government has done a huge amount of good things."

The item was examined in our Inquirer mapping that the Asian Wall Street Journal, edited by a Singaporean who was once posted in the Philippines, gave the country its review editorials and columns when GMA pulled out the Philippine contingent from Iraq.

Even during the height of the impeachment hearings, the Philippine bigwigs of The Economist and Forbes had a note of grudging admiration for the latter lady was able for her political security and tenacity, but also for the economy's resilience in surmounting the daily barrage of news "gross" from political intrigue.

"There is no good alternative to President

PLDT to settle $600M in '05 debts

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEPHONE CO. will convert its $600-million debt reduction target this year as the company took advantage of its financial strength to pay down some obligations ahead of schedule, its top official said.

"All told, consolidated debts will be reduced by more than $600 million for 2005. This will be in excess of our debt reduction target," said PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan.

Originally PLDT was to pay $546 million in fixed-line and wireless obligations this year. The target was later raised to $600 million. Two weeks ago, the company launched an offer to pay $72 million in debts falling due in 2007.

PLDT treasurer and senior vice president Marcelino Claro said the company had already settled $326 million in debts so far this year.

"The final amount for yearend would depend on whether all those holding PLDT's 2007 bonds would agree to sell those

At the start of the year, PLDT's debts stood at $2.8 billion. Of this amount, $2 billion are owed by the fixed-line business. Subsidiary Smart Communications Inc. and PHILWEB Telebilisim Corp. have combined debts of $734 million.

PLDT officials said they would like to see the debts of the parent company go down to $1.5 billion or lower by the end of 2006.

Per-paying debts will allow PLDT to save on interest charges and temporize foreign exchange risks. The company is looking at a net profit of P29 billion this year. Thaineen C. Bacino

COCKTALES

Victor C. Aganon

Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's "first Restaurant declared, as it expressed distaste for yet another call for People Power to remove another sitting president.

Zara rushes in more stock

PR BUY politics grab a bite, the tough go shopping.

Zara had to fly in more stock from Spain Monday after recording "great" sales during the first two days of operations of the clothing chain's Rockwell store.

The rush to buy actually started even during Friday night's pre-inaugural cocktails, when a number of guests expressed immediate interest in the merchandise rather than in the gorgeous models, the female Spanish hairdressers, or the classic "upriver tally" on Mondiola.

What made shopping on opening was that the local Zara clothes have the same prices as those in Singapore and Hong Kong because of the chain's uniform pricing policy.

To make sure that the fit and finish of an very first items in the Philippines complies with company standards, Zara owner Inditex SA corporate's from Spain, incoming items no less than six Mandarins and Peninsulas to build the 1,300-square-meter store.

Even the marble floor tiles came from Spain.

Besides the Zara boom, the other Spanish boutique store at the other end of Rockwell, Mango, every sees its sales rise by 17 percent in the store's weekend, and Rockwell boss, Nestor Padilla, rubbing his hands to glee.

Money-go-round

• CEMEX Pacific has quietly bidded its bonds new, first-enrolling Ambac AAA also on the Manila-Hong Kong route. The 186 Manila flights every have the latest nose of The Economist in every seat.

• THE GOOD price of Robinsons Land has nearly tripled in less than a year, with the stock market position betting that John Gokongwei's plan to increase the size of shares floated and the increased mall dividend policy would finally give the tripster's retail-estate company the same premium as that of Ayala Land and SM Prime Holdings.

Heard through the grapevine

THE JAMIECAMPAIGNS, led by Presiding Justice Teresita Leonardo-de Castro, gave lessons of Makatarungang institutes to Philcontent a temper building yesterday for "motivational" the issue, as the same group led by Mike Arroyo would berate "Boulevard" brandish had done earlier in the Supreme Court.

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FAR EAST MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Megaworld gets 42% of Fairmont

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROPERTY GIANT MEGAWORLD CORP. is moving to make its love cast booming as its Philippine Holdings Inc., formerly gaming firm BW Resources Corp., to 42 percent in line with its ambition to tap all booming economic sectors.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Fairmont said its board has approved to raise its capital by P1 billion to P3 billion from the current P2 billion.

Of the P1 billion increase, 25 percent or P250 million will be subscribed by Megaworld.

The move Megaworld's stake to 42 percent of the proposed increase in issued shares to 2.25 billion.

Megaworld currently owns 35.3 percent of Fairmont's issued shares.

Megaworld's shares ownership of Fairmont with Enterprise Market Assets Ltd. and Hillmore unions spouse Stanley Ho Hung Sun. Enterprise Market holds 11.75 percent while Hillmore holds 5.81 percent.

Fairmont is a holding company which was incorporated in Santa Rosa, Inc., engaged in the manufacture and sale of resin products.

After several profitable years, Bamboo started to experience financial difficulties and eventually decided to liquidate its assets.

In May 1994, Bamboo changed its corporate name to Gaming National and Franchise Technologies Inc.

The company later changed its name to Bonito Risk Resources Corp. in 1994, and again to BW Resources Corp. in 1998. It became Fairmont Holdings Inc. in 2005.

Please turn page B4

Sun launches rewards promo

By Clarissa S. Batino

SUN CELLULAR, THE MOBILE PHONE brand of Digitel Mobile Phil. Inc. has launched a rewards program for prepaid subscribers who would get calls from users of other networks.

The Sobrepower wireless brand wants to generate inbound voice traffic from other carriers as it could collect termination fees from the competitors.

The within-network promo Sun Cellular had initiated were seen to have worked against the company. It failed to share one more revenue.

Dubbed as Lucky 6, Sun Cellular customers will receive a free load worth of P6.66 for every six incoming calls received from other networks within a two-week period.

After two weeks, the free load credits will be sent through text, said Sun Cellular. The free credits will have the same validity as the user's existing load. Promo is up to Jan. 31.

Currently, there are 6 million subs of P4.5 billion from other phone companies. Among the players, Sun Cellular is preserving the lowest interconnection fee because its subscribers cannot mostly within the network.

The Globe spent ₱20 billion to build a hoping that a rewards system would entice their customers to have their friends and families using Smart, Globe, Talk 'N Text and Touch Mobile to call.

Sun Cellular is currently offering Daylight Call and Text Unlimited. The company said the new promo would not replace the popular 24/7 call and text unlimited with in the network.

The unlimited, within-network promo drew up wireless subscription for the Globe-spun phone company.

Sun Cellular customers stood at about 700,000 customers before 24/7 was launched in October last year. As of August, there are 1.38 million Sun Cellular users.

Digitel Telecommunications Phils. Inc., parent of Digitel Mobile, said its consolidated net revenue in the first half rose 21.5 percent at P4.24 billion, but costs and expenses that went up by 38.33 percent to P4.26 billion had offset the gains.

Costs were related to marketing, network expenses, overhead and depreciation.

The company, which also operates a fixed-line network, reported a net loss of P1.09 billion in the first half against P690 million the previous year.

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Shares close flat

Guide Holdings Inc.

The tax measure, which was originally intended to be implemented in July, is the centerpiece of the government's reform program to reduce its huge fiscal deficit. However the opposition filed a restraining order against the bill with the Supreme Court.

"There are two things that have to be considered in this case. First, will the Supreme Court lift the restraining order? And if the court does, will the government be keen on implementing

Please turn page B4

the measure?" Del Castillo remarked.

Continuing political uncertainties sparked by a series of protests against ranking President Macapagal-Arroyo's senior also added investors.

"Right now, there's a lack of interest in the market. People have become more selective, and the political noise has contributed much to this," said Rizal Alen Lamparero of Caimen-Cuizon.

SM Investments Corp. was top traded, rising P4 to P270.

Please turn page B4

Gov't ...

subsidies to state-owned firms now to P2.9 billion from only P600 million.

The year's September revenue collection of P10.2 billion was, however, P600 million higher than the target of P9.6.5 billion.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said that despite the September deficit, the government's fiscal position on a cumulative basis was still healthy and will well on track to meeting this year's target.

"The measures are still looks good. We can easily meet the P150 billion deficit program for the year," Cruz said in a briefing with reporters. Cruz explained that the better than-target fiscal performance in the months prior to September gave the government more flexibility in its budget position.

For the January-to-September period, the budget deficit stood at P106.5 billion, or P27.4 billion below the ceiling of P145.9 billion set for the first nine months of the year.

On the revenue side, the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs, the two biggest revenue of national government funds, registered shortfalls in their collection targets as of September.

The BIR's tax collection stood at P292.9 billion for the first nine months of the year, or lower by P6.9 billion than its target for the period of P302.3 billion. The Bureau of Customs collected only P183.1 billion versus its P192.3 billion goal.

The two agencies are hard-pressed to significantly increase their revenue collections during the three remaining months of the year to meet their 2005 targets. By this year, the BIR and the BOC are tasked to collect P347 billion and P220 billion, respectively.

Cruz said the BIR and the BOC could be very optimistic of become their targets were too high, for each he described to be "no-questions" collections was more than offset by the higher-than-expected revenue collection of the Treasury.

The Treasury collected P94 billion in the first nine months compared with the P28.1 billion that it was supposed to generate. He said revenues generated by the Treasury included dividends collected from state-owned companies and interest income from government's lending to government-owned and controlled corporations.

Collections by the Treasury helped the government exceed its revenue target for January to September. The P689.3 billion worth of revenues for the first nine months was P6.1 billion higher than the target of only P680.4 billion.

On the expenditure side, government disbursements of P696 billion for the first nine months was P26.3 billion lower than the ceiling of P726.2 billion set for the period.

The Department of Budget and Management said the government would likely post some savings estimated at between P6 billion and P10 billion this year because expenditures for the full year might be lower than programmed.

The Department of Finance, head agency of the Treasury, said that with the lifting of the temporary restraining order on the SSC Reform Law (RA9), the government had more chances of reducing the budget deficit for the year to a level below the ceiling of P150 billion.

The Supreme Court lifted the TRO on the SSC law yesterday. The tax measure is estimated to generate some P6 billion in additional revenue in the remaining months of this year and over P60 billion yearly starting 2006.

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DISCLOSURES

PHILCA MINING CORP. disclosed that the output of its copper operations in September was estimated at 1,617,000 kilograms copper; 373.626 grams gold (including bullion) and 250,500 grams silver (including bullion). Its estimated gross value based on prevailing market prices is P458.2 million. Also last month, two copper concentrate shipments totaling 11,351 wet metric tons (WMT) were effected, with a corresponding gross value of P783.42 million.

***

LYNAS Consolidated Mining Corp. appointed on Oct. 11 Ma. Lourdes B. Tuason as its Compliance Officer for Good Governance.

***

IPVC Corp. in reaction to Bloomdale VINtelligence's article "IPVC Norms written guilty to be published Oct. 18 on Inq7.net, the Wet Bird Bio company is suing reporting is incomplete to subsidiary IPV Gamelventures Inc. for its online games business.

***

The Exchange implemented from 9:45 a.m. yesterday a trading halt on **Fernandez Holdings Inc.** shares. This was in line with Fernandez's disclosure that 25 percent of its approved 94-million increase in authorized capital stock, or 268 million at par value of P1.00 per share, was subscribed by Megaworld Corp. *Compiled by Jamie Abrera, PDI Research*

CURRENCIES

October 18, 2005 Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1.0000	1.0000	55.7980
Japan	Yen	0.0088	0.0087	0.4861
United Kingdom	Pound	1.8061	1.7550	97.9883
Hongkong	Dollar	0.1287	0.1284	7.1800
Switzerland	Franc	0.7722	0.7500	41.8985
Canada	Dollar	0.8638	0.8870	48.1838
Australia	Dollar	0.7538	0.7320	40.8538
Bahrain	Dollar	2.6540	2.5780	143.8800
Bahrain	Dinar	2.6540	2.5780	143.8800
Brunei	Dollar	0.5900	0.5730	31.9900
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Thailand	Baht	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Kuwait	Dinar	3.3000	3.2050	178.9000
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.2630	0.2554	14.2700
Saudi	Riyal	0.2666	0.2590	14.4600
Singapore	Dollar	0.5900	0.5730	31.9900
Taiwan	Dollar	0.0300	0.0291	1.6300
Denmark	Krone	0.1400	0.1360	7.5900
Norway	Krone	0.1400	0.1360	7.5900
Sweden	Krona	0.1400	0.1360	7.5900
Iceland	Krona	0.1400	0.1360	7.5900
Finland	Euro	1.3400	1.3010	72.6500
Switzerland	Franc	0.8400	0.8160	45.5700
Norway	Krone	0.1400	0.1360	7.5900
Slovenia	Tolar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Taiwan	Dollar	0.0300	0.0291	1.6300
Greece	Drachma	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Iceland	Krona	0.1400	0.1360	7.5900
Sweden	Krona	0.1400	0.1360	7.5900
Greece	Drachma	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

JANUARY-SEPTEMBER

Gov't seizes P1B worth of counterfeit products

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT'S AGGRESSIVE CAMpaign against counterfeit goods yielded a haul of P1 billion worth of fake products from January to September, surpassing 2004's record of P900 million.

Adrian S. Cristobal Jr., director general of the Intellectual Property Office, said raids across the nation were conducted by the IP units of the National Bureau of Investigation, Optical Media Board, Bureau of Customs and the Philippine National Police.

Cristobal said the improved inter-agency coordination, along with other projects like the creation of special IP courts, would further strengthen the anti-piracy drive.

IPO data show that the OMB seized 3.889 million pieces of pirated optical media products and audio-visual units (PCD)' a million.

According to the OMB, 1,327 inspections and 227 search warrants yielded pirated discs, disc cases, resins, computers, replication machines, stamps, PS and MOSs, VCD and DVD players, CD burners, TV monitors and amplifier speakers.

OMB Chief Ellis Marquez added that four replicating facilities in Valenzuela, Quezon City, Caloocan and Malabon have been shut down.

The NBI reported that, with the help of NGO research warrants, the agency had confiscated some 1.5 million pieces of fake consumer products worth P175.5 million.

The haul included branded shirts, jeans, shoes, underwear, fashion accessories, bags, cosmetics, perfumes, food, medicines, cleaning agents, software, computers, cable TV equipment, parts from trains, automobile parts, and steel sheets.

Also, the BoC reported it intercepted 60,494 pieces of goods worth at least P385.2.

Among the items that BoC took were books, toys, motion equipment, glassware, footwear, clothes, fashion accessories, cosmetic items, cosmetic products and toiletries.

Electricity spot market starts trial operations in Visayas grid

By Abigail L. Ho

THE WHOLESALE ELECTRICITY SPOT MARket (WESM) starts trial market operations in the Visayas grid today in preparation for full commercial operations by June next year.

Rhoda Bryce Laurel, Department of Energy undersecretary and chairman of the WESM Governance Committee, said the implementation of the trial run comes three months ahead of schedule, but said it did not mean an earlier start of commercial operations in the Visayas.

"We believe that starting the Visayas trials early will allow for more thorough preparation for the Visayas participants," he said in a statement yesterday.

For the trial run, he said potential participants would represent more than 1,000 megawatts (MW) of installed generating capacity and demand.

The trial market operation was designed to give participants a chance to familiarize themselves with the electricity issues in preparation for full commercial operations.

The electricity spot market will operate like a stock market. But instead of shares, electricity will be traded, with power generating firms as sellers and electricity distributors as buyers.

The government expects that with the market in place, the distributors would get the least expensive electricity for the benefit of the consumers.

The Manila started trial market operations in the Luzon grid last April.

Trial participants in the Luzon grid represent more than 10,000 MW of generation and 5,000 MW of demand from distributors and other large users of electricity.

Registered participants in the trial run include independent power producers Hijuit Philippines Corp., Kepco Philippines Corp. and First Gas Power Corp.; power distributor Manila Electric Co.; and state firms National Transmission Corp. and the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.

Within the trial period, participants would get to run the nascent trading processes in the electricity bourse, including supply and demand bidding, scheduling and pricing, and eventually, metering and settlements.

P130-M cold storage unit up

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SOLID PHILIPPINES Inc., a joint venture between a Malaysian firm and the Concepcion group, yesterday launched the third phase of its cold storage plant in Pasig City that costs P130 million.

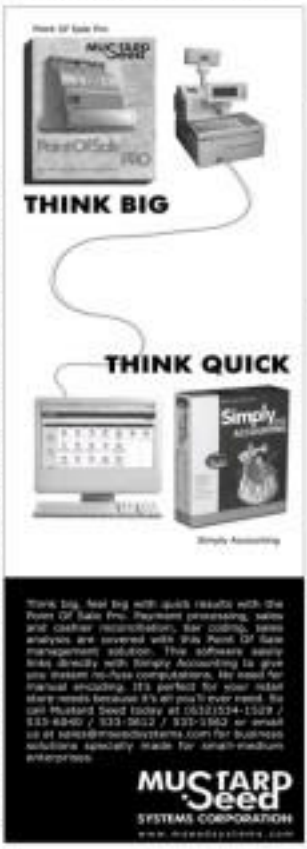
Igbi's fermited 1, like the invisible antimicrobials, can accommodate an initial 3,000 pallets for chilled and frozen product.

Igbi Philippines chair Joel Concepcion Bondal the company was "enormously committed" to quality service for its customers engaged in food manufacturing and processing fruits and vegetables both products, trading of meat and poultry, and supply chain management to retail and fast food outlets.

"This development would enable the company's to further enhance its services to customers within having the burden of high capital investment in continuity for its logistics," Concepcion said.

Igbi Philippines is a 60-40 partnership between the Concepcion family and Malaysia's Igbi Integrated Distributor Low Temperature Operations' Interior manufacturer.

Igbi treasurer Raymond M. Lopez said the additional cold facility here spurs total investments in the country to P850 million.



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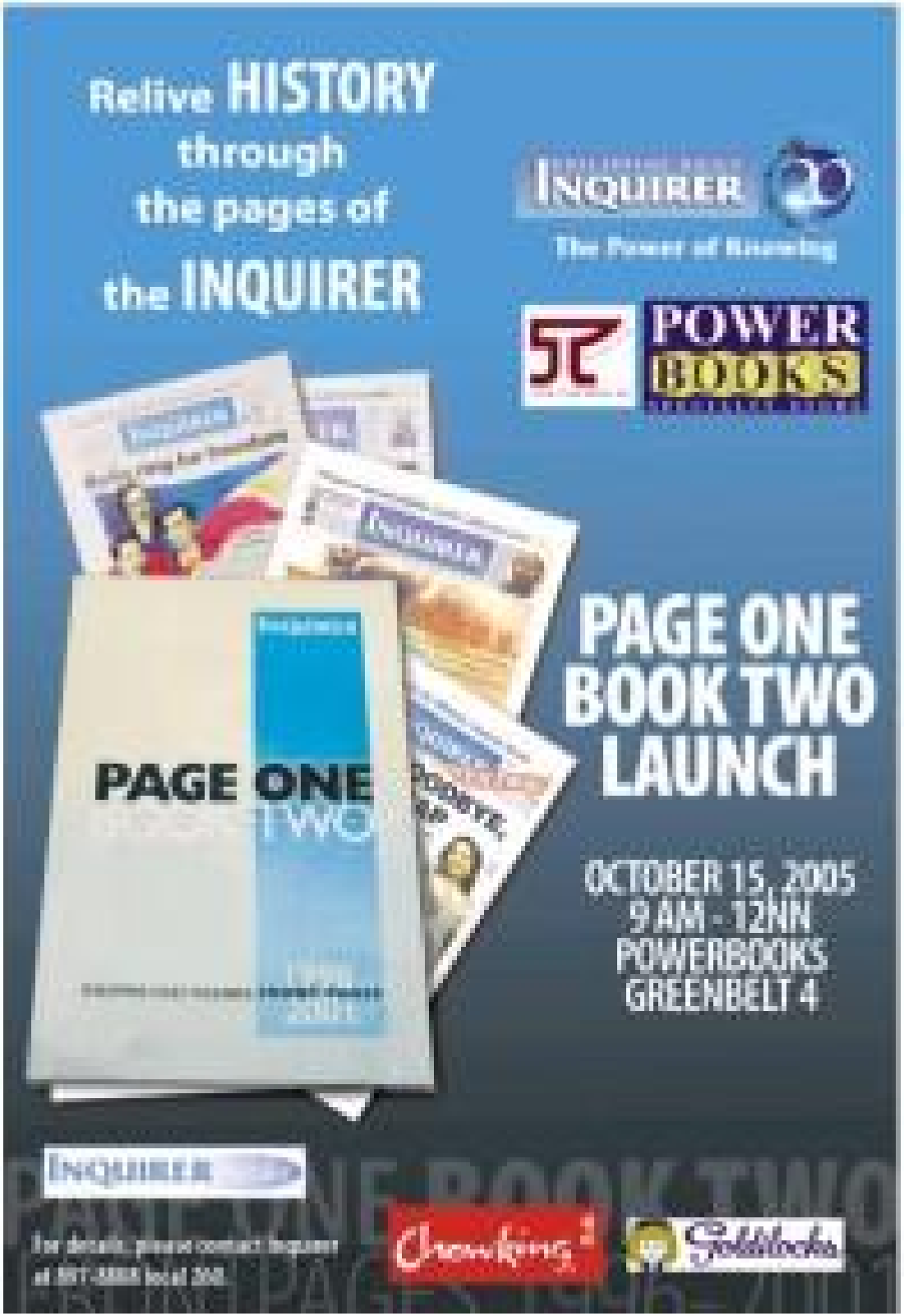

BUSINESS

SEC questions CAP rehabilitation plan

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC) and a group of 11 plan holders continued to oppose the rehabilitation plan of embattled pre-need firm College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP), saying it was unfair to the shareholders.

"All told, CAP is insolvent and in bankruptcy is beyond recovery. CAP's financial collapse is inevitable," the SEC said in a statement filed with the Makati Regional Trial Court. "The SEC in opposing this petition so that CAP's plan holders will have a chance to be paid while CAP still has remaining assets."

CAP said it had yet to get a copy of the statement but Malcolm in the SEC by the SEC.

The SEC said in its comment that CAP itself admitted that it was insolvent, or unable to meet its obligations given its current assets.

In its financial statement as of June 30, CAP had a capital deficiency of P15.8 billion.

As of August, CAP's trust fund deposits were deficient by P394.6 million, in violation of rules pre-need rules.

Based on the company's unaudited financial report as of July 31, its total assets of P15.7 billion were substantially less than total net worth P27.4 billion.

CAP also failed to add some P15.7 billion to its trust fund from 2000 to 2005, the SEC said.

The SEC said CAP's deficit makes it "impossible" for the company to pay its obligations to plan holders.

As of June 30, CAP's trust fund assets were P6.9 billion against reserve liabilities of P22.7 billion.

According to the SEC, CAP's trust fund has been "extremely depleted."

SEC claimed that the bulk of CAP's trust fund investments as of July 30 consisted of real estate, equivalent to 71.6 percent of the trust fund. Its value of pre-need collection (over the fund's total value) deposits is 20 percent.

The SEC also said that CAP's MBT bonds—its prized assets as the most liquid—were now worth just P456 million.

It earlier told MBT bonds of a borrower immediate obligation and put off bids to Bank of Commerce.

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TIME DEPOSIT

Philam Plans to get P500M in fresh capital

By Dora C. Siongco

CLARGA

LEADING INSURER PHILIPPINE AMERICAN Life & General Insurance Co. Inc. (Philamlife) is set to infuse P500 million in fresh capital to Philam Plans, making it the country's highest capitalized pre-need company.

The hike in capital from P300 million to P800 million will enable Philam Plans to expand its business and strengthen its market leadership while maintaining its competitiveness via technology-backed service support, company officials yesterday announced.

"The additional capitalization only means that our plan holders are more assured that their pre-need company of choice, Philam Plans, will serve for them down," said Philamlife president and CEO and Philam Plans chairman Ayo Garcia Jr.

The financial problems encountered by big players like College Assurance Plans, Philam Plans and Pacific Plans have adversely affected public perception of the pre-need industry.

Philam Plans is the country's top performing pre-need company in terms of sales, contributing 22 percent of the total market. It is also the dominant provider of education plans with a 39 percent share of the country's education plan sales from January to July this year.

"We are taking this momentous step ... because it is both the responsive and responsible thing to do," Philam Plans president Jesse Heffernan said. "Our response to the pre-need crisis is precisely to improve our service, using belief in the viability of the pre-need profession by increasing our stake in the business."

Education and pension plans each account for 40 percent of Philam Plans' new business. Memorial plans take up the remaining 20 percent.

Philamlife wants to raise the authorized capital of Philam Plans from P300 million to P1.5 billion. It has already filed an application with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

The pre-need unit has close to 800,000 plan holders who are backed by P16.9 billion in trust funds, the biggest and most liquid in the industry.

Philam Plan's investors portfolio is over 60% cash in nature.

Unlike other pre-need companies that face liquidity problems, Philam Plans limited its products offerings to fixed value plans and went against the business norm to DPSP when competitors were flooding the market with open-ended plans.

Today, the fixed value product model has proven to be the only sustainable pre-need plan in the market, Garcia said.

In 1994, the company introduced the Lapse first plan with the launch of the Gateway Junior pre-need installment, setting 9% plans with limited income of a couple and investment only to save for the future.

GOINGS-ON

Polish miners

TOP OFFICIALS OF POLISH COPPER COMPANY KGHM Polska Miedz S.A. arrive in the Philippines soon this to explore the possibility of investing in the country's mining sector.

The delegation, accompanied by Hexagon Capital managing partner Dolores Wade, was overjoyed of KGHM chief executive officer Stanislaw Jamaszek, company vice president and board member Andrzej Kraj, director-executive responsible for international relations Wojciech Kedzierski and director for new initiatives Herbert Wirth.

Kraj also attended the Asia Pacific Mining Conference held in Makati on Oct. 12-13.

The delegation also visited the site of the Diwalwal Competitive Joint Venture between KGHM Polska.

Members of the team also met with executives of Benguet Corp.

Entrepreneurship forum

[illegible] people [illegible] taught how to run businesses. Organizational consultant for Entrepreneurship Asia Incorporated Robert Ito, whose favorite, were for children at [illegible] to learn the basics and be exposed to a real enterprise.

Together with the Department of Education, Entrepreneur will showcase some of the current thinking and value-enhancing models during a forum entitled "Entrepreneurship and Basic Education: Searching for Young Minds Here" on Oct. 25, 2003 from 7 a.m. at the Manila Polo Club's Blue Lounge.

Administrators and secondary school owners and campus directors may get the most out from by registering at Tel. 819-1020 ext 819-3919 loc. 1101 and 1108.

Enrollees will receive the Entrepreneurship Asia Incorporated's programs of the international system to promote and get access to the entrepreneurship and high school models.

3-day gab for architects

THE 18th NATIONAL ELECTION OF THE PHILIPPINES will hold a three-day conference starting tomorrow, Oct. 15, at the Pinnacle Country Hotel in Tagaytay City.

With "Empowerment Beyond Millennium" as conference theme, the IMF will point out several issues to strengthen practices of architecture and discuss including global opportunities offered by the Asian Region.

The Asian Pacific Institute does business and shares qualified Filipino architects practice their profession in Asian economies and not

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LIFESTYLE

Editor-Chiefs Raoul Fernandez
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Art you can wear

Don't you want to slip on a masterpiece?

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Rudel Barani

SOME STORES ARE JUST stores. You walk in, you choose something, you pay for it, they bag it, you walk out.

Some stores are not just stores. You walk in but you don't just choose something because you want so many things. And you don't just walk out because you're fall-en in love.

That's what happened to us at Artwork.

Run by 26-year-old John Aaron Villareal with the help of his dad and his mom who started the business in 1980, Artwork now boasts 30 branches nationwide.

We walked into their Glorietta store and were swept off our feet by a wide-ranged collection of T-shirts, tanks, polos, jackets, bags, shoes, sandals, flip-flops, wallets, belts, caps, bandanas, socks, underwear, boxers, bras, panties, sleepwear, swimwear, and even a few accessories.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

2BU! EXCLUSIVE

Taking five with Maroon 5

2bU! spends some downtime with the hot band

By Angela V. Ignacio
2bU Correspondent

REALLY, DO THESE GUYS even need an introduction?

For the past three years, the hunky pop-rock quintet has become a household name, effortlessly churning out romping radio hits and equally popular videos. Who could forget their "This Love" and "She Will Be Loved?"

Following their multiplatinum debut "Songs About Jane" and the live album "1.22.03.Acoustic," they've just released a CD-DVD combo set titled "Live From The Mint" a few weeks ago, probably to whet their fans' appetite while they're working on their

Taking five with Maroon 5

From page C3

second full-length album.

They have recently ended their European tour and bagged the Best New Artist trophy at this year's Grammys. All this from a band who once went by the name of Kara's Flowers.

JMJ recently had a casual little chat with the sexy frontman Adam Levine as the band wrapped up a series of phone interviews with other members of the Asian press. After a relentless string of events (drummer Ryan Dusick just had shoulder injury), the boys are now blissfully leaving the time of their lives doing, well, nothing. But don't fret—you haven't seen the last of them yet, and they've got more up their sleeves. Ladies and gents, hang on to your shorts.

Where are you guys right now?

Home, in LA. We're very happy to be here.

How's Ryan's shoulder?

It's better now. He's trying to heal himself and getting ready to play.

Sounds like happy-go-grungy turned at Kara's Flowers to Maroon 5's Moves-ical pop funk, how has your music evolved?

We didn't really know what we were doing... We were experimenting with music 'cause we were so young and in high school. We grew up, and we started involving people in our musical process, and all of a sudden it kind of led to what it became. And we've started doing R&B and hip-hop as we get older.

You've worked with Kanye West and the Yin Yang Twins, so I guess you're striking a little more hip-hop flavor to your brand of music, huh?

Yeah, I think so! I think it's always been a part of what we did, but I'm really happy that the people who are making the music we love are approaching us to do music with them... We've always wanted to collaborate with artists like Kanye, whose new record is incredible, and the Yin Yang Twins are doing fresh, cool, interesting stuff in their record, and it's one of the best out there right now... So I'm really happy to have done some stuff with them. It's like socializing and a little bit, getting involved with other artists.

Have you write all of the songs, how do you get your creative juices flowing?

Yeah, I write a large part of the lyrics and melodies, and I collaborate with the band on all of the chord progressions and those types of things. Jesse [Carmichael], vocalist/guitarist/pianist] is amazing... He has this practical sensibility that he adds to it.

What's the song that's closest to your heart so far?

MAROON 5's Adam Levine (vocals), Ryan Dusick (drums), James Valentine (guitar), Mickey Madden (bass), Jesse Carmichael (keyboards)

Probably "She Will Be Loved," 'cause when I wrote that song I felt a very special connection to it, like I immediately knew it was gonna be a big hit. It started to bring our band to a whole new level, so I'm very happy. When I first heard it, I had this incredible feeling.

How was it like filming the video with Kelly Preston?

It was awesome! She was our first choice... So we asked her and she said yes. It was great. I got to make out with an older woman... But I had to do it early in the morning and I had bad breath, so I had to eat a lot of breath mints. (laughs)

Ohmmy, that's disarming. It's been quite a while since "Songs About Jane" came out. Fans are asking, what's taking so long?

I think we're just taking our time. We want it to be a real process, because all of a sudden we have more material for our new record, and it's good. We want it to be of high quality, 'cause otherwise the fans will be disappointed, right? We don't want to release crap.

Can you give us a sneak preview? Like, tell us what's to come for us in the next album?

It's gonna sound more hyperactive, I think. A little bit crazier, definitely more stuff going on, and not as mid-tempo. A lot of hyper grooviness... I'm not sure what it's gonna be, 'cause we still don't really know. I can't say for sure... but I know that it's gonna be good and fun and deep and kind. Very intense.

Good. About your recent meets—you've opened for the Rolling Stones, right?

Yeah. We toured with the Stones, which was incredible—they're the best rock band ever. It's something you can't pass up.

Is it true you were pointedly snubbed by Gwen at Grammys? Y'know, as in "What's your room #on to that?

Yeah, we were. My reaction to that is, I don't really care about the people, I just really like their music, so if they don't like us, that they can just f--k off. I mean, I love their music, but they've always been kind of standoffish.

You've sworn off work this summer, and you've dabbled in the "Summer of Love," What did you guys do?

We loved. (Snickers) Jesse started that thing, right?

Yeah. I think so. I think Mickey (Madden, bassist) mentioned wanting to learn how to surf.

Mickey wants to learn how to surf! He's very chrissy, so I wish him luck. I don't know if he'll be able to do it.

So what's on your agenda?

Right now, relax, stop talking about myself and think about other things, just kind of decompress a little bit, I guess... But I'm [also] gonna write music, hang out with my friends and live life. I've been running and achieving and doing all this wonderful stuff, but I really kind of want to start living a normal person.

What was the weirdest thing a fan ever did?

Every time we go to Ohio, these girls would bring us vegan brownies. And I mean every time.

Sounds pretty, uh, appetizing.

So, they're actually pretty good. It's actually one of the homemade vegan products I endorse.

Now for the serious stuff. Aside from Kara and Jesse, I hear you've dedicated a song to victims of hurricane Katrina.

Yes. It was a cover of the Beatles' "Don't Let Me Down," and it was for the American Red Cross benefit. That was actually amazing; we're really happy that we wrote a song that wasn't ours... We thought that song was kind of appropos to the benefit.

More and more artists are taking up noteworthy causes nowadays, whether political or humanitarian. So, what do you guys stand for?

Hmm... We have so many, I don't know if we can narrow it down to one. I know that we love working with children, and right now we're involved with one organization called Save Impact (an LA-based program for adolescent cancer patients). It's enough and tell to our kids that aren't getting sick... We really had a wonderful time with them today, and we plan to do something more for them.

You guys are something of a pop icon for the youth. How can you help them be aware of the current global situation?

I think that we should just continue to be aware and intelligent, to think about what we say and say it in a way that they can understand. We can all be good role models, to be good people and not to be mixed-minded in any ways and in anything... In life our lives the way we feel more appropriate while helping people. It's hard to set an example that is worth following, but hopefully that's our goal.

I think many kids are requesting us [On I Get Answered, Take Action], that kinda to your official website where Jesse gets on.

Yeah, Jesse's a big fan of that forum. [Laughs] I think it's getting people to be aware of what's happening in the world. It's not about, like, "I'm gonna tell you what to believe and what to think," just knowing the facts is very important.

And now for the million-dollar question. When are you guys coming here?

Next year, next year. Be patient and we will come, I promise... so soon point.

Okay, I'm counting on that. Will you marry me? Just kidding.

Of course! Let's do it.

Great. So I'll be waiting for you till next year, then.

Okay, perfect.

E-mail the lyrics to his at cnadt_ee_mile@maxtone.net.

Love the food, love the voice

Kitchie Nadal co-writes and sings McDonald's new 'Love Ko To' jingle

Text and photos by Miss Mark M. Sabbat
Staff Correspondent

RONTO MCDONALD'S Greenhill was transformed from a busy fast-food joint into a hip and happening pocket concert venue as McDonald's—everyone's favorite fast food chain—announced to members of the media the latest "Love Ko To" jingle as performed by rock princess Kitchie Nadal.

With her impressive and assertive singwriting skills, plus a smashing debut album with hit songs such as "Change Of Ground" and "Wag Na Wag Mong Isasabihin," Kitchie is a great pick to voice the new McDonald's "Love Ko To" song, after Sweetnes idol Rivalot Jasmine Trias.

The song's lyrics and melody may have changed, but the signature "Pagsasaya, kasi ito 'ko" line still remains.

Unlike Jasmine, Kitchie participated in composing process, co-writing the lyrics with Ray Tiongco, the advertising agency senior copywriter who penned the original McDonald's "Love Ko To" jingle.

"They gave me the original song, I revised it and then I collaborated with Mr. Tiongco to give the song a new vibe," says Kitchie.

The new McDonald's "Love Ko To" song is all about Kitchie's emotional journey as a performer and her sources of inspiration. Her fans and her batch, the full-length version can now be heard in radio stations and in all 230 McDonald's outlets in the Philippines. It will also be included in Kitchie's follow-up to her self-titled debut album.

SHOWING the stuff that has made her today's Rock Princess

SOUTH Pacific

SPORT Mix

Casual, functional footwear

HUSH PUPPIES' SPRING/SUMMER 2006 collection showcases advanced comfort technology with fun, contemporary styling. The new designs will be launched via a fashion show on Oct. 25, 4 p.m., at the Atrium of Shangri-la Plaza Mall.

From the American shoe brand that invented casual comfort comes the practical finest Smart collection. The shoes have unique features that add extra protection, providing all-day comfort with the brand's energy-return gel pad and revolutionary foot-fit technology. This results in a lightweight, flexible walking experience.

This technology is also present in Cool Sandy sandals, along with the new Bounce bounce that stores and releases energy to propel your stride forward at every step.

Hush Puppies also promises the ladies a colorful line-up of chic, sleek kitten heels and easy-to-walk wedges through the Wood Witch collection. The hot beach Pacific leather and metallic sandals are the latest members of Hush Puppies' pattern-pending Wave Surface design.

A dynamic selection from Sport Mix completes the collection for men and women, with its sporty casual designs.

Open to the public, the fashion show also celebrates the opening of the newest Hush Puppies store at Unit 302 Level 3 Shangri-La Plaza Shaw Blvd. corner EDSA Mandaluyong City, 1550.

Hush Puppies is a division of Wolverine Worldwide, the world's leading maker of casual, work, and outdoor footwear. Hush Puppies is headquartered in Rockford, Michigan, and is distributed in the Philippines by Shoemark Shoe Inc.